"BURNING MATCHES, LIFTING LATCHES"

SOCIOLOGY, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE BEATLES

Anthony Ian Inglis

A critical appraisal submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by published work

February 2003

From Me To You

Annette, Eleanor, Christopher and Susannah

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ABSTRACT

The research output collected together in this volume presents a social scientific investigation of elements of the career and music of the Beatles. Through its use of sociological and social psychological perspectives, it is able to offer fresh insights into one of popular culture's more familiar narratives. It maintains that an adequate understanding of the group's achievements, and the debates and issues they provoked, can only be achieved by rigorously locating them within the context of the social and cultural forces in which they emerged and by which they were constrained. While it remains true that much may be learned about the group from individual or specialist sources, the significance of this research lies in its strategy of considering those contributions as a whole, and subjecting the body of knowledge they contain to a systematic and critical analysis. In doing so, the research reveals much about particular facets of the Beatles' career, encourages further scrutiny of some of the conventional explanations of the group's success, and emphasises the validity of such examinations in a period when the personal and professional activities of its members continue to be consumed with great enthusiasm.

University of Northumbria at Newcastle

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SOCIOLOGY, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE BEATLES

"Burning Matches, Lifting Latches":
Sociology, Popular Culture And The Beatles

My academic interest in the Beatles began in 1996 with the publication of the first paper in this volume by the US journal *Popular Music And Society*. It was enthusiastically received; I received several messages expressing mutual interest and, as I had become aware of additional and attractive topics growing out of my research for that first article, I decided to continue my explorations of some of those themes.

The subsequent papers were published in a number of international refereed journals: in the UK (*Popular Music* and *Visual Culture In Britain*); in the US, (*Popular Music And Society* and *the Journal Of Popular Music Studies*); and in Europe (*the International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music*).

As the body of work increased, so did the number of activities flowing from it. In 1997, I was invited to guest-edit an issue of *Popular Music And Society*, concentrating on the Beatles and their music. In 2000, my edited book *The Beatles, Popular Music And Society: A Thousand Voices* was published in the UK by Macmillan and in the US by St Martin's Press; it has since been translated into Japanese and was published in that country in 2002 by Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha. This was an original volume of contributions, commissioned by myself, from academics in the UK, the US and Australia. It was the first collective, broadly sociological analysis of the Beatles to appear in book form. In 2002, I was invited to join the editorial board of *Popular Music And Society*; I believe that I am, at the moment, the only member of that board based in the UK. And in Spring 2003 my second edited book *Popular Music And Film* is to be published by Wallflower; it contains my chapter *The Act You've Known For All These Years* which considers the conventions of the musical biopic through an examination of the cinema's treatments of the group's career.

I have also given conference papers relating to my research. In July 2000, I presented a paper entitled *Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow: The Place Of Nostalgia In The Continuing Story Of The Beatles* to the UK Conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music at the University of Surrey. In November 2000, I presented a paper entitled *Music, Myth And Rumour In The Film Biographies Of The Beatles* to the See/Hear Music And Film Conference (Centre for Research Into Film & Media) at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. And I was an invited speaker at the 2nd World Conference on Music And Censorship in Copenhagen in September 2002, where my paper *Turn On, Tune In...Shut Up! The Censor In The Living Room* (although not directly about the Beatles) considered US television's censorship of popular music in the 1960s in a rapidly changing cultural climate which the Beatles had done much to create.

Together, these outputs have constituted a coherent and original body of knowledge which has undoubtedly stimulated my ability to successfully engage in other areas of research and publication, and which has allowed me to pursue an active role within popular music studies.

Of course, long before my research was begun or completed, there had existed a huge amount of literature which recounted the events surrounding the transformation of the Beatles from a semi-professional Liverpool skiffle group into four of the definitive and recognisable personalities of the twentieth century.

Many of these accounts were biographical. They focused on the group as a whole (Davies 1968; Schaffner 1977; Norman 1981; Burrows 1996; Martin 1996), or on its individual members (Coleman 1984; Flippo 1988; Goldman 1988; Giuliano 1989; Clayson 1991; Miles 1997; Shapiro 2002), or on the lives of others peripherally

involved in the Beatles' story (Hopkins 1987; Clayson & Sutcliffe 1994; Yule 1994; Fields 2000; Geller 2000).

Others were musicological, offering analyses of the group's musical output and discussing the creative interplay between the group and its significant contributors (Mellers 1973; O'Grady 1983; Hertsgaard 1995; MacDonald 1995; Everett 2001).

Some were anecdotal, relating a variety of incidents from particular periods of the Beatles' career, and often based on the authors' temporary proximity to the group (Williams & Marshall 1975; Pang & Edwards 1983; Martin 1994; Garry 1997; Saltzman 2000; Taylor 2001).

Others again were chronological, presenting diary-like compilations of more or less significant dates, events and personnel from the group's history (Schultheiss 1980; Friede *et al* 1981; Fulpen 1982; Harry 1992; Lewisohn 1992).

A number were photographic, assembled from the files of those photographers or photo-journalists who enjoyed relatively easy access to the group during its touring and performing years (Hoffman 1982;Whitaker 1991; Spencer 1994; Freeman 1996; Davis 1998; Hill & Clayton 2000).

And some were individual and highly-detailed 'case studies' of specific aspects of the group's activities (Evans 1984; Howlett 1996; Kendall 1997; Neaverson 1997; Axelrod 1999).

The range and volume of publishing activity was not surprising, given the impact of the Beatles in the 1960s, and their continuing celebrity in the thirty-plus years since they effectively disbanded in 1970. In addition, the fact that the group and its members have been perceived to co-exist at a number of differing levels – as a historical event, as a musical force, as a cultural phenomenon – has encouraged a

diverse range of literary or documentary approaches. What was surprising, however, was the continued absence of any sustained sociological investigation of the group, its music, and the debates they provoked. And what was even more surprising was that this absence had persisted throughout and despite a period of academic life in which increasing intellectual attention was directed at both the broad area of 'cultural studies' and the particular area of 'popular culture'. Indeed, while "the changing terrain of popular culture has been explored and mapped by different cultural theorists and different theoretical approaches" (Storey 1993: 18), the group described as "the most important single element in British popular culture of the postwar years" (Evans 1984: 7) has been largely excluded from those analyses.

My research has begun to correct that imbalance and, in so doing, has demonstrated that the 'story of the Beatles' lends itself to a sociological analysis. The research revealed that while the group's career was certainly unique in terms of its achievements and influence, it was simultaneously illustrative in its ability to inform many of the perspectives through which popular culture (and, more especially, popular music) is studied and to illuminate many of the issues with which those studies are concerned. By referring those issues and perspectives to their appropriate political, social and economic contexts, the research articulated the historical factors that distinguished the career of the Beatles, recalled the prevailing structures and cultures of the popular music industry (and the limitations they brought), and acknowledged the broader social environment within which they were located.

It was this emphasis on the reciprocal connections between the Beatles, popular music and society that characterised the research and invited a broadly-based sociological perspective to be added to those others from which the Beatles have been investigated. From the outset, I believed such an approach – objective and impartial –

to be essential in order to fully appreciate the overall dimensions of the group's career. In this regard, the recognition by Mellers of the complexity of activities and roles in which the Beatles engaged was an important insight into the nature of their success:

> The Beatles' significance, as a part of social history, is inseparable from the ambiguity of their function...if this multiplicity of function is a source of much semantic confusion, both on the part of the Beatles themselves and of those who comment on them, it is also a source of their strength (1973: 183).

His observation suggested that the diverse nature of the group's success could not be adequately disclosed by an approach which was only biographical or musicological or anecdotal. An approach was required which was unprejudiced, flexible, prepared to cross disciplinary boundaries, and which paid equal attention to the personal and the public components of the Beatles' career and its many overlapping facets – musical, political, commercial, stylistic, historical. What I am attempting to describe here, of course, is 'the sociological imagination', defined by C. Wright Mills:

> The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals...the sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society...it is the signal of what is best in contemporary studies of man and society (1959: 11-12).

What my research set out to do therefore was to bring the sociological imagination to bear on one specific subject - the Beatles. In fact, this formulation of

sociology has been additionally described in a way which seemed especially appropriate when applied to the Beatles:

> The sociologist is a person intensively, endlessly, shamelessly interested in the doings of men...the sociologist is the man who must listen to gossip despite himself, who is tempted to look through keyholes, to read other people's mail, to open closed cabinets (Berger 1963: 29-30).

I have referred above to the variety of roles which the Beatles sought out and explored throughout their career, and which set them apart from any of their predecessors within the popular music industry. To a great extent, this energy reflected the qualities of curiosity, innovation and experiment which were first evident in their music, but quickly came to permeate all aspects of their personal and professional lives. In different ways, Lennon-McCartney's insistence on writing their own songs, the group's decision to stop touring in 1966, their readiness to admit using drugs, the formation of Apple, their involvement in film and cartoon production, their very public search for religious guidance, the pursuit of individual projects while still within the group, even their physical appearance, were evidence of an unfamiliar and general restlessness which had much in common with the inquisitiveness referred to by Berger. That the behavioural traits of the Beatles and the intellectual habits of the sociologist should display the same general set of characteristics was a further indication of the propriety of applying a sociological perspective to examinations of the group and its history.

Thus, the analogy of "burning matches, lifting latches" (from the lyrics of "Two Of Us") not only reflects the attributes identified by Berger, but also well describes the musical changes, personal detours and creative risks in which the

Beatles enthusiastically participated. Not all of them were efficiently managed or satisfactorily concluded, but they did consistently exemplify the proactive and dynamic nature of the group's career, and provided templates for others to follow.

I provided a detailed analysis of these tendencies in *Conformity, Status And Innovation: The Accumulation And Utilization Of Idiosyncrasy Credits In The Career Of The Beatles*. The theory of idiosyncrasy credits was originally developed by Hollander (1958, 1976) within social psychology to explain the emergence and maintenance of leadership patterns in small task-related groups. In applying his ideas to the position enjoyed by the Beatles within popular music in the 1960s, I wished to move away from the over-used and under-defined concept of charisma repeatedly (and unsatisfactorily) employed to explain the group's spectacular successes, to an explanation that recognised the separate stages inherent in the leadership process. Hollander's assertion was that initial entry into any group or community was achieved by a routine conformity to that group's norms; that high status and leadership within the group was dependent on continued conformity and visible competence; and that the maintenance of leadership derived from radical and innovative behaviour which did not conform to existing conventions. I suggested that the case of the Beatles provided an elegant and accurate depiction of this process, which followed their entry into the popular music community, their adherence to its conventional expectations, and their subsequent disruption of those expectations. Based on those observations, I also developed a typology of stardom, in which the twin axes of career duration and ideological position combined to produce a sixfold classification of stardom which, I believe, can be equally applied to many other areas of popular culture.

That first article had originally been sent to the *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music*. Despite two or three follow-up letters, there was

no acknowledgement of its receipt, and I therefore submitted it to *Popular Music And Society*, where it was quickly accepted. Almost immediately, the *IRASM* contacted me to confirm its decision to publish also; I explained that it had been offered to *Popular Music And Society*, but suggested that I would be happy to prepare another paper which, while covering some of the same ground, would expand my discussion by comparing the dynamics of the Beatles' career with that of popular music's other most distinguished performer.

The arguments were developed in *Ideology, Trajectory And Stardom: Elvis Presley And The Beatles*. While the theory of idiosyncrasy credits offered an appropriate summary of the Beatles' career, it was not applicable to all of popular music's star performers. Melly (1970) pointed to the ability of the entertainment industry to contain potential disruptions, by incorporating them into a commercially profitable and ideologically 'safe' enterprise, whereby the possible 'revolt' is assimilated and redefined as a new 'style'. Here, I argued that the career of Elvis Presley, in which initial non-conformity was eventually, and successfully, replaced by an enduring and predictable conformity, supplied a demonstration of this process in practice, which contrasted sharply with the history of the Beatles. Although some of the material duplicated that in the previous paper, the research's principal significance was that its comparison of popular music's two most successful and celebrated performers, often bracketed together in many ways, revealed contrary directions in the trajectory of their careers. In terms of my typology of stardom, Presley was the 'rebel' who became a 'perennial', while the Beatles were the 'idols' who became 'innovators'.

Unprecedented and exceptional as the achievements of the Beatles were, it is important to note that this did not isolate the group from the rest of popular music.

While they may have been its most successful practitioners for the best part of a decade, they did engage, formally and informally, in collaborative and mutual operations with other performers – as composers, producers and contributing musicians. I explored one particular aspect of this in *Synergies And Reciprocities: The Dynamics Of Musical And Professional Interaction Between The Beatles And Bob Dylan*. I employed two concepts - familiar within sociology, less so in their application to popular music – to examine the nature of the relationship that developed throughout the 1960s between the group and Bob Dylan. My use of the concept of synergy (suggesting that co-operation between the two created a synthesis of energies) and the concept of reciprocity (stressing the symmetrical nature of the interplay between them) demonstrated that these interactions led to musical outcomes that would otherwise have remained unattainable, including the growth of folk-rock, the emergence of the West Coast as a major musical location, and the early development of psychedelic rock. My argument suggested that while neither concept was developed with popular music (or popular culture) in mind, they were, in this instance at least, entirely appropriate for its analysis. The components of a common goal or interest, voluntary association, active co-operation, self-regulation, diverse activity and a collective sentiment were as well suited to explain the mutual transactions between Bob Dylan and the Beatles as they were to illuminate the economic and organisational patterns for which they were formulated. The analysis offered a compelling example of the way in which sociological theory could be usefully applied to the examination of popular culture.

Although I have stated that it is essential to appreciate the breadth and variety of the activities in which the Beatles were involved in order to comprehend their success, nonetheless it was the group's music which was at the heart of their (real and

perceived) activities; and it was their music that I turned to in *Variations On A Theme: The Love Songs Of The Beatles*. Throughout the diverse genres that popular music has presented, it is the love song that has remained its principal output. Using the categorisation of 'lovestyles' developed by Lee (1973, 1977), I systematically analysed the group's own compositions in order to ascertain the extent to which the music of the Beatles reflected the general themes and traditions of popular song. The results revealed a sudden and profound difference in the nature of the group's songs between 1962-65 and 1966-70. Influenced by their decision to stop touring, their growing musical association with Bob Dylan (see above), and their increasing familiarity with drugs, two shifts were evident. First, there was a clear reduction in the number of love songs and a greater willingness to write about other topics (which formed an important part of their innovatory policy, discussed above). Secondly, where they did continue to write love songs, the experiences of love to which they referred were of a very different kind. Once again, theories (in this case, social psychological) not previously applied to popular culture in any systematic way, were able to enhance our knowledge of the Beatles and their music. And, in passing, it might be speculated that the group's ability to write about the single topic of love from a number of perspectives was one explanation of the success they enjoyed.

A similar kind of analysis into the music of the Beatles was conducted in *And I Will Lose My Mind...Images Of Mental Illness In The Songs Of The Beatles*. Following on directly from the research in the previous paper, this study (co-written with clinical psychologist Annette Hames) concentrated on the ways in which the mental distress associated with an unhappy love affair (or other tragic life event) were exemplified in the Beatles' lyrics. After distinguishing between the major forms of neuroses and psychoses identified by psychologists, we discovered that the Beatles

compositions referring to experiences of mental illness changed abruptly (from the neurotic to the psychotic) at precisely the same time that the nature of their love songs changed (as revealed above). While it would have been absurd to suggest that the group made a conscious and deliberate decision to cease writing about mental illness (or love) from one perspective in order to adopt an alternative perspective, our findings again supported the contention that the career of the Beatles needed to be seen as a process in which distinct, if overlapping, stages can be discerned. And again, the application of psychological concepts to the world of popular music appeared to be a wholly appropriate strategy through which these stages could be identified.

Any cultural phenomenon must be contextualised before it can be comprehended. While this may appear obvious, it is a necessity that often goes unheeded in studies of popular music, where there is a continuing tendency to reduce its history to a series of separate and revolutionary events or flashpoints. I endeavoured to provide such a context in *Men Of Ideas? Popular Music, Anti-Intellectualism And The Beatles*. Without wishing to minimise the impact that the Beatles brought with them to popular music, I placed the group's emergent and fashionable success in the early 1960s within the context of the changing intellectual conditions of postwar Britain. I suggested that the Beatles were less the inventors of new trends and opportunities in the 1960s, than the inheritors of choices first revealed in the 1950s – a decade in which barriers between 'the intellectual' and 'popular culture' began to be dismantled. The argument was developed by comparing the innovative roles given to the Beatles, and others, in the 1960s with the attributes seen as typical of the secular scholar (Znaniecki 1940) and of the intellectual within contemporary mass culture (Coser 1965). As the decade progressed, the Beatles consequently, and significantly, came to be regarded not merely as musicians, but as

'men of ideas' introducing, for the first time in popular music, the possibility that entertainers might also be thought of as intellectuals.

The reliability of historical explanation is as sensitive a topic in accounts of the history of the Beatles as it may be in accounts of events which took place centuries ago. Although recent history has the benefit of abundant and accessible documentary evidence to which the historian can refer, the devices or strategies for discovering what is 'true' remain uncertain. Using the example of the dismissal of the Beatles' first drummer in 1962 (and his replacement by Ringo Starr), I considered these issues in *Pete Best: History And His Story*. In assessing the competing explanations which purported to relate Best's departure from the group – deviancy, conflict, incompetence, status liability - it became increasingly clear that there was, as Carr (1961) has asserted generally, no single, satisfactory reality at which one could hope to arrive. Interpretation, imagination and invention surround historical explanation; what comes to pass as 'history' may have little to do with accuracy and more to do with expediency. The particular case of Pete Best offered a warning that no historical account – of the Beatles or any other event – can ever be free from doubt. It also attested that the purpose of the sociologist is not to instruct but to understand. While the goal of sociological research may be to participate in the generation and circulation of knowledge, it should not seek to insist that one body of knowledge is more valid than all others.

Some of the issues raised by the verification of historical explanation were also addressed in *The Beatles Are Coming! Conjecture And Conviction In The Myth Of Kennedy, America And The Beatles*. Unlike the dismissal of Pete Best, where there were competing versions of events, the dramatic and spectacular American success of the Beatles in early 1964 had been uniformly and consistently approached through a

frame of reference which saw an unassailable causal connection between the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, the subsequent sense of national gloom, and the antidote provided by the arrival of the Beatles. This explanation had been allowed to go unchallenged, to the extent that it was repeated automatically whenever the 'British Invasion' of the 1960s was remembered. However, there were alternative explanations, often overlooked, but worthy of examination. I considered these explanations – musical, demographic, structural, sexual, personal, promotional – not in an attempt to 'disprove' the Kennedy theory, but simply to present them as possible contributory factors, and thus move away from the static, moribund account which had been permitted to prevail for so long. As indicated above, it was an attempt to focus the sociological imagination on an event which had largely evaded such scrutiny in the past.

The group's capacity for innovation, discussed in several of the preceding papers, was tested in a very specific way in *Nothing You Can See That Isn't Shown: The Album Covers Of The Beatles*. Considerable praise had been given to the Beatles for the original and daring design of their album covers, for the explicit connections these forged between art and pop, and for the benefits this brought to the graphic design industry. And indeed, there is little doubt that many of their album covers are among the most familiar and imitated in popular music's history – "With The Beatles", "A Hard Day's Night", "Revolver", "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band", "Abbey Road". However, I chose to examine the album covers not just as examples of new and influential styles of graphic design which linked the group's visual image with its current musical output, but also as examples of 'readerly' texts (where 'meaning' is already assigned) or 'writerly' texts (where 'meaning' has to be negotiated). In the course of this examination, it quickly became apparent that the

album covers of the Beatles were readerly texts, which left little room for any alternative interpretation or dispute about what it was that they signified. In this sense, the fact that they were memorable, striking or influential was irrelevant; they were fundamentally conservative texts which closed off negotiation. In the light of the many other examples of the Beatles' boldness and inventiveness, this was surprising. It confirmed that in assessing the group, it was important to consider not only what the Beatles were, but what they were not.

That paper provided one indication of the profound importance of the visual in the Beatles' career. And I offered a further investigation of the visual – rather than the musical – element of the group's output in *From Fab to Fantasy: The Roots And Routes Of The Cartoon Beatles*. Although many historical accounts of the Beatles had emphasised the impact of their physical appearance, one of the more interesting ways through which that appearance was constructed and promoted had been largely overlooked. Early in the Beatles' career, the group, and its manager Brian Epstein, realised that films offered a viable and cost-effective way of meeting a worldwide public who could not be accommodated through live concerts. Later, it was realised that cartoon films offered an even more attractive vehicle, since they dispensed with the need for the Beatles to be there at all. I subjected the (very different) cartoon depictions of the group in "The Beatles" TV series (1965-67) and the "Yellow Submarine" movie (1968) to a comparative analysis. These depictions reflected and contributed to public understandings of the group and its four members; they helped to consolidate images that remain in circulation today; and the styles and strategies they employed were to have considerable repercussions in the worlds of popular music, television and the cinema. Like the album covers discussed above, the cartoon portrayals of the group were a significant element in a commercial strategy which

ensured that the visual impact of the group was almost as great as its musical impact, and which played a considerable part in the unprecedented global celebrity of the Beatles.

The research in these ten publications thus combined, and benefited from, insights which reflected a variety of disciplinary approaches – not just sociology, but social psychology, history, music, biography, visual culture. The advantages of such a multi-disciplinary approach allowed for an imaginative and capable body of research, which was well suited to investigation of a topic which itself straddled several spheres of activity.

There was one final factor which gave an additional strength to the research. Heinonen (1998) has suggested that the pattern of the Beatles' career exactly replicated social psychological models of small group development:

(1) group formation: the Quarrymen years (1957-60)

(2) group integration: the Hamburg-Cavern years (1960-62)

(3) the work group stage: the Beatlemania years (1962-65)

(4) group differentiation: the psychedelic or art-rock years (1965-67)

(5) group termination: the post-Epstein years (1967-70).

The research I carried out explicitly supported such a model, and also gave significant attention to each of these stages. It affirmed, as has been indicated, that concepts of 'history' and 'process' had to be employed in analyses of the Beatles and their music, in order to avoid partial or incomplete sketches.

One of the group's principal biographers has warned of the proliferation of "myths and rumours, multiplying stronger than ever around this scarcely-imaginable, true story" (Norman 1981: xvi). I believe that my research has challenged many of those myths and rumours, has for the first time critically and systematically analysed

the career of the Beatles using the theories and methods of social science, and has contributed new insights into popular music's most celebrated story.

Original Contribution To Knowledge

Academic or scholarly accounts of the Beatles and their music were scarce during the period of the group's professional activity in the 1960s; this may not be surprising, given the relatively low profile of cultural studies in the UK at that time and the absence of any popular music journals which deprived those academics who did engage in such research of a regular forum in which information might be exchanged and ideas tested.

One of the very first pieces of research to consider the achievements of the Beatles was Wilfrid Mellers's *Twilight Of The Gods: The Beatles In Retrospect*. Published in 1973, it was essentially an essay in musicology (Mellers was Professor of Music at York University) which nevertheless contained valuable insights into the nature of the dynamics between group members, their pursuit of commercial success, their transition from performance to production, and their capacity for personal and professional (re)invention. The book introduced the Beatles' music as an appropriate topic for serious discussion, and established a template for analyses of the group which may have concentrated initially on its musical characteristics, but which also went on to offer broader commentaries on its career (O'Grady 1983; MacDonald 1995; Hertsgaard 1995).

The work of historian Jon Wiener in 1984 demonstrated that the Beatles were also proper subjects for a historical investigation that went beyond the chronologies of tour dates and personal appearances, and which attempted to locate them within a political rather than a musical context. *Come Together: John Lennon In His Time*

examined the intersections between Lennon's struggle to be allowed to remain in the US, Richard Nixon's anxieties about a radical counter-culture inspired in part by the Beatles, and the country's continued involvement in Vietnam.

In 1987, *Popular Music 6.3* marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beatles' first recordings with producer George Martin. The essays were chosen in order to illustrate the various approaches from which popular music might be studied; they included musicology (assessments of the group's formative style), sociology (the part played by the Beatles in the emergence of a new Australian beat group music in the 1960s) and narrative analysis (the dream structure of Paul McCartney's 1984 film "Give My Regards To Broad Street").

And in 1992, the account by Ehrenreich *et al* of the impact and implications of Beatlemania during the British Invasion of the USA brought a perspective largely neglected in previous accounts of the group's success. Its identifications of the tensions surrounding the construction of female sexuality, and the opportunity the Beatles gave to audiences to confront those tensions, was a clear indication of the manner in which sociologically-based explanation could contribute much to analyses of popular culture.

Valuable as they are, it is important to note that these contributions were also exceptional. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, the majority of published material about the Beatles continued to be informed by the conventions of popular biography, personal recollection, or chronological compilation.

The current resurgence of Beatles-related studies from the mid-1990s has been influenced by three principal factors. The first was the appearance of a number of bands, who persistently acknowledged the musical and stylistic importance of the Beatles in their own work. Oasis, Blur and Pulp were among the better known of the

'Britpop' bands whose successes served to re-focus attention on those earlier British groups from whom they claimed inspiration, and for whom it would appear the Beatles have assumed an iconic or talismanic significance.

Secondly, there was a sudden increase in the number of projects engaged in by the Beatles themselves. In December 1994, Apple released "The Beatles Live At The BBC", a double album of early radio recordings, which sold more than six million copies within a year. This was followed by the release of two 'new' singles - "Free As A Bird" (December 1995) and "Real Love" (March 1996) - on which the three surviving Beatles added their vocal and instrumental contributions to demo tapes made by John Lennon in the 1970s. In November 1995, the group's own six-part television documentary series "Anthology" was broadcast across the world. And three triple albums – "Anthology 1" (November 1995), "Anthology 2" (March 1996) and "Anthology 3" (November 1996) – provided more previously unreleased material for public consumption. Together, these initiatives served to re-introduce the group as a major commercial force.

Thirdly, from the academic world, there were a number of individual outputs whose cumulative effect was to reinstate the Beatles as a legitimate topic for academic investigation, and which did much to stimulate and sustain further research. I believe that my own research, from 1996 onwards, has helped to play an important part in that reinvigoration. Apart from directing attention at aspects of the Beatles' career that had evaded critical scrutiny in the past – ranging from the content of their love songs to their status as intellectuals, from social psychological formulations of their career stages to the construction of their 'history' – my research has encouraged and developed a recognition that there remains much to be said about the group and its music, and has provided opportunities for others to do so.

As a result of these three developments, there has been, over the last few years, a substantial and concentrated growth of research activity. One of the first illustrations of this was the publication of *Popular Music 20.4* in 1997, which I edited, and which concentrated exclusively on the Beatles. Emphasising mainly musical elements of the group's career, the seven essays explored themes which included the significance of the group's choice of cover versions in its early years, Lennon-McCartney's reliance on the standard AABA form in their songwriting techniques, a comparative analysis of the group's songs and those of the Brill Building, and evolutionary patterns in the lyrics of the Beatles' compositions. Encouraged by its reception, I undertook to commission a collection of papers eventually published in 2000 in the book *The Beatles, Popular Music And Society: A Thousand Voices*. Again, a wide variety of original and innovative themes was explored in the eleven chapters, including the Beatles' role in the formation of subcultures of youth in Britain, the utilisation of the Beatles' music in dance-related activities of the Liverpool gay community in the early 1960s, the linguistic development of the group's compositions, the formation of the group's celebrity, and the Beatles' experiences of censorship. The establishment in 1997 of the Beatles 2000 Research Project within the Department of Music at the University of Jyvasklya, Finland, and its first Interdisciplinary World Conference on the Beatles in June 2000 confirmed the interest of the international academic community. And the publication of a number of books in recent years testifies to the status that the practice of Beatles studies now undoubtedly enjoys; they include Anthony Elliott's exploration of the nature and significance of societal reactions to John Lennon's death (*The Mourning Of John Lennon*); Russell Reising's edited collection of papers which revisits "Revolver" in order to evaluate its musical and cultural impact (*Every Sound There Is*); and the two

volumes by Walter Everett in which he investigates in exhaustive detail the songwriting strategies and performance techniques of the group (*The Beatles As Musicians*).

I believe that the contents and consequences of my own research have been instrumental in the revitalisation and definition of academic interest in the Beatles. There now exists, for the first time, a substantial body of knowledge, a community of enthusiastic researchers, and a significant literature: to each of these I have been able to make original and important contributions, and encouraged others to do the same.

Methodology

Much of the information presented and evaluated in the research comes from secondary sources. There are two principal reasons for this choice: the abundance of such material and its suitability for the particular projects in question.

As noted earlier, the past four decades have produced a huge number of commentaries on the Beatles (my own estimate is that there have been 400-500 books about the group and its members). The volume and variety of information clearly presented me, as a potential researcher, with a dilemma: should I take advantage of such a plentiful resource, overlook its inconsistencies, and utilise it freely; or should I dismiss it on the grounds that much of it fails to meet appropriate criteria of reliability, validity and representativeness?

In fact, I was very keen to employ this material, and the insights and ideas it contained, for a number of reasons. First, I was persuaded by the argument that the often frankly subjective components of life stories, narratives, autobiography and biography can be combined within "the study of the fuller 'life' [which] has been gaining ground as part of a general biographical approach spanning a wide range of

humanistic disciplines" (Roberts 2002: 167). Since one of my principal concerns was to situate the Beatles within the many perspectives and disciplines from which their story had been told, it seemed sensible to employ rather than reject competing versions of that story...however contradictory or subjective they might appear to be.

Secondly, I was aware that my *own* decision to undertake research into the Beatles (rather than, for example, the Doors, the Beach Boys, or the Rolling Stones) itself betrayed a certain partiality that might render its results invalid in the eyes of those searching for absolute objectivity. The research project was, *of course*, influenced by my age, gender, social class and occupation (not to mention my musical preferences). Thus, my attempts to understand the music and career of the Beatles reinforced the necessity to question my own role and to realise that "an adequate conceptualisation of the social world has to include the activity of researching it...the researcher is not simply observing from a position of detachment" (Cooper 2001: 11). If this realisation did not debar me from engaging in such research (on the contrary, I believe that it advantaged me) it would seem perverse to debar the contributions of others also not in a position of detachment.

Thirdly, I was confronted by the inescapable obstacle that many of the events excavated in the research took place more than thirty years ago, and that several of the key actors in those events have died. In some cases, the accounts offered are the *only* accounts available. Whatever theoretical and practical difficulties these testimonies may bring, in circumstances like these "it is assumed that they are more likely to be an accurate representation of occurrences in terms of both the memory of the author (time) and their proximity to the event (space)" (May 2001: 180). While documentary sources do not constitute social reality, they may nevertheless point towards particular

perceptions of social reality; and I felt that such perceptions added greatly to the range and scope of the research.

Fourthly, it is undoubtedly the case that the reanalysis of existing data may offer new interpretations. This seemed to be especially pertinent in several of the papers here. For example, many accounts had pointed to the contrast between the music and activities of the group in its early phase (1962-65) and its later phase (1966-70); only by considering those observations within the theoretical framework of idiosyncrasy credits was I able to offer an innovative explanation of the impulses behind these differences. Similarly, the available evidence on the transformed personal circumstances of the Beatles had been largely and anecdotally used to provide examples of their increased wealth and fame; my analysis of that data suggested that there were also considerable repercussions for the nature of the music they created, and my own inspection of the lyrical concerns of their love songs indicated the ways in which this might be seen. And in my examination of the various versions of the circumstances of Pete Best's dismissal from the group, I chose not to uncritically accept those accounts as material facts, but to question the contexts and consequences of the stories they told in order to illustrate that all such historical data is inevitably coloured by interpretation, imagination and invention. The observation that "new theoretical ideas may suggest analyses that could not have been conceived of by the original researchers…[and]…may prompt a reconsideration of the relevance of the data" (Bryman 2001: 199) was, I believe, fully justified by the arguments I presented in these papers.

A related form of secondary analysis is content analysis, and this methodology formed the basis for arguments put forward in the two papers which involved a systematic scrutiny of the lyrics of Beatles compositions. The basic goal of content

in an analysis of the songs of Jagger-Richards, or Bob Dylan, or other contemporaneous composers, in order to provide a direct comparison between their lyrical themes and those of the Beatles.

In seeking to overcome the problem of inaccurate categorisation, I drew on the advice given in Babbie's discussion of the distinction between 'manifest' and 'latent' content. Coincidentally, the illustration he used was also 'love' – although in the context of literature rather than popular music. To determine manifest content, the researcher may "simply count the number of times the word 'love' appears in each novel, or the average number of appearances per page"; to determine latent content, the researcher might "read an entire novel...and make an overall assessment of how erotic the novel was...[which]...would not depend fully on the frequency with which such words appeared" (Babbie 1979: 240). The ideal strategy, he suggested, is to use both methods; this was what I decided to do, and the resulting agreement between depth and specificity produced by the two methods was exact enough to give confidence in the assignation of songs to categories.

Overall, I was reassured that my employment of content analysis satisfied the formal criteria (that the categories should be accurately utilised, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive) and met the additional requirement that "they must also be enlightening, producing a breakdown of imagery that will be analytically interesting and coherent" (Slater 1998: 236).

In addition to the specific strategies discussed above, I supplemented the research programme as a whole with three interviews. As noted previously, several of the key personnel in the story of the Beatles have died, and those that survive do not readily make themselves available for meetings with researchers. However, I felt that where possible, it was desirable to conduct personal interviews with individuals

whose accounts might add to and expand information I had acquired elsewhere; after all, "interviews yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (May 2001: 120).

Pete Best was the Beatles' drummer from August 1960 to August 1962. During that time, the Beatles fulfilled three separate and lengthy residences in Hamburg, made more than 200 appearances at The Cavern in Liverpool, appointed Brian Epstein as their manager, overcame the death of Stuart Sutcliffe, had an unsuccessful studio audition for Decca, were offered a provisional recording contract with Parlophone, and made their first recordings with George Martin. I interviewed Pete Best in September 1995, when his group, the Pete Best Combo, was appearing in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Victor Spinetti enjoyed a long creative association with the Beatles during the 1960s. He appeared in "A Hard Day's Night" (1964), "Help!" (1965) and "Magical Mystery Tour" (1967). He co-wrote (with John Lennon) and directed "The Lennon Play: In His Own Write" which was staged at the National Theatre, London in 1968. I interviewed him in February 1996, when he was appearing in the Royal Shakespeare Company's annual season in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Pauline Sutcliffe is the younger sister of Stuart Sutcliffe who died, shortly after leaving the Beatles, in 1962. She is the co-author of two books (1994, 2001) about her brother and his relationships with the Beatles. I interviewed her in February 1998 at her art gallery in Notting Hill, London during a retrospective exhibition of her brother's paintings.

In order to retain as much flexibility as possible, the interviews were unstructured, took place in informal surroundings, and were tape-recorded; they each lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The unstructured interview allows both researcher

and respondent greater freedom in the choice and delivery of questions and answers than any other type, and departs from the 'interrogator-informant' relationship. However, it is dependent on the establishment of rapport, mutual familiarity with the topic, and a recognition of each other's contribution to the conversation. The warning that "the interactive nature of the interview...constitutes at one and the same time its major strength and its major drawback as a method of social research" (Crano & Brewer 2002: 223) is a reminder of the importance of these conditions. It is inevitable that the presence of the interviewer will, in some ways, impact upon the form and content of the exchanges. While acknowledging this as a potential drawback, I felt that I was able to adhere to the rules of efficient unstructured interviewing: "...being able to keep most of the interview conversational while following various digressions, remembering which questions the flow of information has answered, and being prepared to question more deeply and precisely when necessary" (Lummis 1987: 231).

As a former journalist (regional newspapers and BBC local radio) I am fortunate to have had considerable experience of conducting interviews. There are, of course, significant differences in the aims and objectives of the press interview and the research interview. Nevertheless, I believe that the ability to draw from that experience, coupled with my substantial awareness of the topic and my genuine enthusiasm for additional knowledge, helped to create three effective encounters. I feel that I gained much in the way of opinions, confirmation of facts, offered insights and personal anecdotes, which helped to illuminate the contextual landscape in which many of the Beatles' personal and professional activities took place. In addition, the fact that I was able to make significant contributions to the conversations led, I am

sure, to an open, spontaneous and very valuable exchange of ideas and information from which the research benefited.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONFORMITY, STATUS AND INNOVATION:

THE ACCUMULATION AND UTILISATION OF IDIOSYNCRASY

CREDITS IN THE CAREER OF THE BEATLES

Conformity, Status and Innovation: The Accumulation and Utilization of Idiosyncrasy Credits in the Career of the Beatles

Ian Inglis

Much has been written—in sociology, journalism, musicology, and biography—about the emergence and development of the Beatles. Their transition from a Liverpool pop group into international stars and acknowledged leaders of musical and cultural styles has been repeatedly chronicled but rarely analyzed. An explanation of the mechanisms through which the Beatles were able to achieve a position of influence within popular music, maintain that position over several years, and from that position enhance their status via departure and innovation is offered by considering their career within the broad context of Hollander's theory of idiosyncrasy credits. Although it is sometimes neglected as a contribution to investigations of conformity, status, and deviance, this paper argues that Hollander's theory is of especial relevance to an understanding of the Beatles' history. Furthermore, its central concepts are utilized in the construction of a typology of star careers, which also incorporates ideological roles, and which might usefully be applied to explanations of celebrity in other areas of popular culture and contemporary entertainment.

Idiosyncrasy Credits

> Idiosyncrasy credits may . . . be considered to be the positive impressions . . . held by others. These credits represent accorded status. They have the property of allowing nonconformity, innovation, and the assertion of influence. Basically, credits accumulate as a result of perceived conformity and competence. (Hollander, *Principles* 485)

Within the context of small groups, Hollander contends that regular and unambiguous demonstrations of conformity to prevailing norms and expectations are a crucial component in enabling an individual to create favorable impressions, and thus to secure a place within the group. The greater the degree of conformity displayed by the individual, the greater the status he or she subsequently enjoys; conformity and status are in this sense mutually dependent. This may be particularly true for newcomers striving to establish entry and maintain membership. By allowing themselves to be seen acting in ways which express loyalty to the group's beliefs, such newcomers are likely to be readily perceived as "co-oriented" members. Ridgeway, in her elaboration of Hollander's theory, indicates that "a member is co-oriented with the group to the extent that the member shares (or is perceived to share) the group's basic attitudes. . . . Co-orientation requires a basic acceptance of group goals, although it does not require complete agreement on all details pertaining to those goals" (Ridgeway, "Conformity" 186).

Although separated for analytical purposes, the notion of competence is implicit in much of Hollander's discussion of conformity. An individual's adherence to group norms needs to be accompanied by evidence of perceived levels of competence or performance of central group activities. In other words, full integration of an individual into the group demands some active assistance toward the realization of its goals as well as mere support, however enthusiastic that might be.

Competence and conformity are, then, in Hollander's model, used to acquire "credits" in the eyes of other members of the group; credits reflect respect and are symbolically "exchanged" for increased status. Those individuals who have amassed the most credits in this way (i.e., those who enjoy the greatest status) may become leaders.

It is here that the importance of the idiosyncratic element of these credits becomes apparent. Persons possessing a store of such credits are permitted to deviate, to exhibit nonconformist or idiosyncratic behavior without risking the disapproval of the group. Acquired credits represent an investment or balance against which such transgressions can be safely enacted. Each transgression can only be tolerated to the extent that the individual holds sufficient credits to cover such behavior. If enough credits do not exist (i.e., if the individual has not yet consolidated his or her status within the group), instances of nonconformity will serve to reduce and curtail the positive impressions held by the rest of the group,

with severe consequences. "By definition, affiliation with the group . . . ceases when the individual's credit balance reaches zero" (Hollander, "Conformity" 121).

Thus far, Hollander's theory might be seen to be merely stating what is unsurprising and noncontroversial: those who conform to group expectations enjoy higher status and greater influence within the group than those who do not. But his concern with status is merely part of his discussion of leadership, and at this point he introduces into the debate a less obvious prediction:

> With a constant level of competence, the person's early nonconformity to procedural norms should decrease his or her influence. On the other hand, late evidence of nonconformity, after credits are accumulated, should produce the reverse effect. Once having attained higher status, there should be a shift in expectancies which actually makes procedural "nonconformity" a confirming feature of status, thereby increasing influence. (Hollander, *Principles* 485-86)

According to Hollander's analysis, therefore, it would appear that once a certain number of credits has been accumulated by the individual (although the precise stage at which this is perceived to take place is not specified) the group's expectations of him or her change. Whereas before, nonconformity was not tolerated and might be penalized, now it is encouraged and rewarded; risk-taking, departure, innovation are expected. They become the major ways in which aspiring or actual leaders can maintain their status and add to their influence. Leaders who fail to engage in such activities may in fact face the very penalties they would have incurred had they chosen to engage in those activities when their store of credits was lower. Indeed, Hollander draws attention to the fate of "a leader who . . . adopts a passive and ostensibly safe course, but loses status" (Hollander, "Conformity" 126). The fact that a newcomer to the group, whose credit balance is relatively low, will gain status by adopting a passive and ostensibly safe course serves to emphasize what Hollander judges to be "the key consideration in the idiosyncrasy model . . . that behavior perceived to be nonconforming for one group member may not be perceived as such for another" (Hollander, *Principles* 485).

These then are the principal components of Hollander's theory, one of the major attractions of which is undoubtedly its simplicity. However, a number of points require clarification. First, as discussed by Donelson

R. Forsyth (265) the acquisition of a large balance of credits does not grant the individual unrestricted freedom to deviate wildly from the group's expectations. Individuals can go too far; their behavior can be too extreme, too dangerous (in its consequences for the group) such that it immediately exhausts their credit balance. A second related issue centers on ways in which motivation for innovative behavior is evaluated by group members. Behavior which is perceived as self-oriented rather than co-oriented is less likely to be rewarded with increased credits. If, as seems reasonable, groups generally welcome conformity rather than nonconformity from their members, there is a real risk that acts of nonconformity may be interpreted as acts generated by selfish motives, which will again lead to substantial deficits in an individual's credit balance and a loss of his or her status (Ridgeway, "Conformity").

Third, it needs to be emphasized that the decision of a leader or potential leader to engage in idiosyncratic behavior is not automatic or inevitable. Much depends on the nature of the group, its agreed goals, and perceived evaluations of prior tasks. Individuals who enjoy a high balance of credits merely have the capacity to so behave without fear of sanctions. Similarly, while the acquisition of credits per se assuredly reflects status, it does not guarantee that individuals will strive for, or achieve, a leadership role. Rather, it signals that they possess characteristics which grant them the ability to adopt such a role: "[I]t should not be supposed that an abundance of credits must lead perforce to influence. While an individual thus endowed has the potential to display more idiosyncratic behavior than others, he might not do so, nor would he of necessity become a leader thereby" (Hollander, "Conformity" 125).

A fourth point relates to the failure by Hollander to distinguish adequately between authentic conformity, superficial conformity, and erroneous conformity. It might be argued that these are relatively unimportant classifications, since the award of idiosyncrasy credits to those seen to be conforming implies a concern with behavioral outcome rather than behavioral intent. Even so, there are good reasons for recognizing those individuals whose commitment to the group is genuine and whose "motivation to belong [is] both high and sincere" (Hollander, "Conformity" 126). Others falsely claim to uphold group norms in order to secure membership and make additional gains. Their behavior may involve elements of pretense, deceit, and expedience.

There are also those who, rather like the members of delinquent subcultures discussed by David Matza, are actors in a comedy of errors. They mistakenly believe that all other members are truly committed to group norms, and therefore act in a like way themselves (Matza).

Whether these deficiencies and the possibilities they might suggest for later refinements and specific elaborations of Hollander's theory serve to invalidate its basic concepts can best be judged by employing that theory in a specific context. At this point, therefore, I wish to move toward a consideration of its application within the realm of popular music. This should not imply an assertion that the model can be unequivocally and automatically transposed from the examination of small, task-specific groups in which it was originally formulated into the myriad discourses that surround and define popular music. But I believe that, in a general sense, Hollander's model derives from and suggests a theoretical framework of sufficient flexibility to allow for a transfer of its fundamental properties. Hollander's comment that the theory has relevance "in a small face-to-face group or a larger social entity such as an organization or society" (Hollander, *Principles* 485) seems to indicate his belief that such a move would not be inappropriate. Ridgeway, despite her misgivings about several of the theory's assumptions, is nevertheless able to refer to "its intuitive appeal" (Ridgeway, "Nonconformity" 335). It is on the basis of such observations that I shall seek to employ the concept of idiosyncrasy credits to help to understand and explain the musical career of the Beatles.

The Beatles

When the candles blew out, only the music was left. Only myths and rumours, multiplying stronger than ever around this scarcely-imaginable, true story. (Norman xvi)

On one level the story of the Beatles is deceptively easy to relate, not least because it has been retold, reproduced, and reinvented on so many occasions. John Lennon met Paul McCartney in Woolton, Liverpool, on July 6, 1957, and shortly afterward invited him to join his group (then known as the Quarrymen). In 1958 McCartney introduced Lennon to George Harrison; these three remained the nucleus of the group amidst numerous variations in personnel, changes of name

(Johnny and the Moondogs, the Silver Beetles, the Beatles), and a performing history largely confined to Merseyside (with occasional spells in Hamburg) for the next five years. At the beginning of 1962 they agreed to place their management in the hands of Brian Epstein, a local businessman. In August of that year, several weeks after the group had accepted a provisional recording contract with EMI's Parlophone label, drummer Pete Best was replaced by Ringo Starr. In October 1962, "Love Me Do," their first official single, was released and became a minor chart entry; and in February 1963, "Please Please Me" became their first British No. 1. In January 1964, "I Want To Hold Your Hand" was their first American No. 1, and for the rest of the decade the Beatles dominated popular music around the world. They toured extensively until August 1966, when they elected to abandon live performances in favor of studio work. Epstein died in August 1967, and in 1968 the Beatles set up their own management and recording company, named Apple. In April 1970, after increasing involvement in individual projects, the Beatles effectively disbanded. John Lennon was shot dead on December 8, 1980, in New York City. The remaining three Beatles still, intermittently, pursue their separate careers.

Accurate as it is, what accounts like this cannot fully convey is the sheer scale of the impact that the Beatles had, initially within the popular music industry, and later across a range of related areas and activities, including: youth subcultures, fashion, songwriting, movie making, merchandising, political debate, the use of drugs, and so on.

The Beatles' significance, as a part of social history, is inseparable from the ambiguity of their function. As pop musicians they are simultaneously magicians (dream-weavers), priests (ritual celebrants), entertainers (whiling away empty time), and artists (incarnating and reflecting the feelings—rather than thoughts—and perhaps the conscience of a generation). If this multiplicity of function is a source of much semantic confusion, both on the part of the Beatles themselves and of those who comment on them, it is also a source of their strength. (Mellers 183)

Following Mellers, I wish to suggest that the ambiguity or multiplicity of function that characterizes the Beatles' career is not separate from or coincidental to their musical success. Rather, it stems directly from an acquisition of status, primarily generated by musical factors, which

quickly permitted and eventually encouraged diversification, departure, and innovation.

Conformity

John Lennon: Why don't you start right now and get yourself as famous as the Beatles? It's quite easy if you want to work twenty-four hours a day, and keep smiling and dancing for ten to fifteen years. Then you can do it. (Sheff & Golson 79)

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the British popular music industry was dominated by a handful of record labels based exclusively in London, a philosophy of songwriting which saw little or no connection between composing and performing, and a set of leading performers who were obvious imitations of their United States counterparts. BBC Radio broadcast just two regular weekly pop programs—*Saturday Club* and *Easy Beat*, both on the Light Programme. Television coverage was similarly sparse, fluctuating between the formality of *Juke Box Jury* (BBC), the variety show format of *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (ITV) and occasional attempts to recreate the excitement of live rock'n'roll in shows such as *Oh Boy* (ITV) and *Six Five Special* (BBC). Significantly, most of these programs—on radio and television—were broadcast, like sport, on the weekend. In this sense, the scheduling of popular music reflected the rather peripheral importance attached to it by the media.

Similarly there existed an equally strong set of expectations about the demeanor and deportment of British pop stars. A catalogue of sensational and reprehensible behavior quickly accumulated around the leading American performers. Elvis Presley was banned in several American cities for obscenity and had been shown on television only from the waist up; Little Richard fluctuated wildly between on-stage hysteria and seeking salvation with the Seventh Day Adventists, on one occasion flinging several thousand dollars' worth of jewelry into the sea after he had prayed (successfully) to God to save a burning airplane in which he was a passenger; Chuck Berry served a lengthy prison sentence for statutory rape; and Jerry Lee Lewis's 1958 British tour was canceled and he was forced to leave the country after it was discovered that his wife, who was accompanying him on the tour, was only thirteen years old. And there were fatalities, too—Eddie Cochran in a car accident in

Britain which also seriously injured Gene Vincent; and Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper in a plane crash in the United States. By contrast, the reputations and images of British artists were dignified, controlled, and exemplary. From Tommy Steele onward, the success of the domestic music industry was built around a seemingly inexhaustible supply of personable and conventional young men; the biggest scandal and potential disruption to this process had been the controversy surrounding the failure of Terry Dene to pass the required medical examination for compulsory conscription in 1958. The system ultimately became so efficient that Nik Cohn is able to identify the construction and maintenance of a triumvirate that presided over British pop for several years at this time:

> Of the three, [Billy] Fury was the most exciting, [Adam] Faith the most intelligent, [Cliff] Richard the most competent. What they had in common was that they ended up smooth. In every way, they became predictable. They had tidy smiles and non-committal accents and nice manners. They tended not to make fools of themselves in public. Between them they made pop stars almost respectable. (Cohn 69)

Of course there were those who did not fit into this dominant type, but even here their apparent deviation from the majority was seen as self-parody rather than rebellion. Indeed it can be argued that those such as Wee Willie Harris (who dyed his hair pink to match the suits he wore) and Screaming Lord Sutch (who would take to the stage in a chariot or emerge from a coffin) were, by promoting their own absurdities, buttressing the very conventions they appeared to be questioning, in much the same way that Lord Sutch's subsequent political career has acted.[1]

Three other observations need to be made about the circumstances of the British pop industry in the early 1960s. Almost without exception, its leading performers were white, male, and solo. Even when groups were featured, the billing emphasized the appropriate distinctions: Cliff Richard and the Shadows, Joe Brown and the Bruvvers, the Karl Denver Trio. The reason given by Decca's Head of Artists & Repertoire, Dick Rowe, to Brian Epstein in 1962 when rejecting the Beatles, demonstrates exactly the industry's concern to persevere with what it perceived as desirable: "Not to mince words, Mr. Epstein, we don't like your boys'

sound. Groups are out, four piece groups with guitars particularly are finished. The boys won't go, Mr. Epstein. We know these things. You have a good business in Liverpool. Stick to that" (Epstein 51). Instead, Decca chose to sign Brian Poole and the Tremeloes, from London, because they were locally based and because they conformed to the familiar lead singer and backing group model.

Entry to the popular music industry was therefore strictly controlled and carefully monitored. For aspiring young singers, the major hope of success lay in joining one of the teams or "stables" of singers managed by one or another of the country's leading promoters, whose decisions about music, dress, appearance, even name, were imposed on cohorts of young men only too willing to relinquish control over artistic and financial issues in return for the rewards of becoming a pop star. The best known of these was Larry Parnes, whose stable included Billy Fury, Duffy Power, Cuddly Duddly, Vince Eager, Johnny Gentle, Dickie Pride, Marty Wilde, Lance Fortune, and many others.[2]

What all contributors to the literature on the Beatles agree on is that the group, at that time, possessed none of the characteristics typically associated with British pop stars. The lack of a named lead singer was an impediment, and their regional location a discouragement, but these obstacles could be overcome. Billy Fury was, after all, from Liverpool, and there were groups, like the Mudlarks, who had enjoyed consistent, if unremarkable, success over several years. However, in the crucial matter of personal presentation and demeanor, they were more problematic. At the same time that Adam Faith was proudly revealing that the greatest moments in his life were meeting the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at the 1960 Royal Variety Show, and being chosen to appear at the 1961 Royal Film Performance before the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, and Lord Snowdon (Gowers 57), the Beatles were fashioning their own memorable moments at the Indra Club, Hamburg:

> Over the course of a long night onstage, they found that the more they drank, the better they felt and the better they felt, the more they drank. They began to feel they could get away with anything. . . . [T]hey all taunted the crowds to a certain extent, but John [Lennon] became an expert at it. He would call them "fucking Nazis" or "fucking Krauts" . . . . [H]e would goose-step around the stage, saluting, and daring the crowd to "get up and dance, you lazy bastards!" (Flippo 94-95)

What, then, facilitated a transformation of such remarkable magnitude that by late 1963 the *Daily Mirror*, in a lead editorial, was able to pronounce the following?

> You have to be a real sour square not to love the nutty, noisy, happy, handsome Beatles. . . . [I]f they don't sweep your blues away—brother, you're a lost cause. If they don't put a beat in your feet—sister, you're not living. . . . [T]he Beatles are whacky. They wear their hair like a mop—but it's washed, it's super-clean. So is their fresh young act. (Norman 192)

The answer rests on the success with which Brian Epstein was able to convince the group, once he became their manager, that in order for them even to contemplate careers in popular music, it was essential that they begin to create favorable impressions within that industry. By agreeing to conform to many of the routines and expectations prevalent within that environment, the Beatles can thus be seen to have embarked on a stage in their career which would result in an increasing acquisition of idiosyncrasy credits. Epstein forbade certain forms of behavior including smoking, drinking, eating, and swearing on stage. Their leather jackets and jeans were replaced by mohair suits and ties. He insisted they bow at the end of each song (Epstein, Coleman). He arranged studio and location photographic sessions in Liverpool so as to have a portfolio of suitable images with which to impress the major record companies (Kaye). He went to great lengths to conceal Lennon's marriage to a pregnant Cynthia Powell, banning both from talking publicly about their relationship lest it damage the group's image. He rationalized and restructured live performances, insisting on a set routine of sixty minutes, and issued them with advance memoranda, detailing each week's forthcoming engagements:

> Sunday 29.7.62 REST
> Monday 30.7.62 L.T. (Lunchtime): Cavern. St. John's Bootle: Equipment to arrive no later than 7.15 p.m. and group no later than 8.00 p.m. Dave Forshaw is looking forward to this night for some time and it is, of course, for this hall a major investment. Give 'em a good night. (Flippo 160)

Many later accounts have suggested that these changes were imposed on the Beatles, with the greatest hostility coming from Lennon

and the least resentment from McCartney. But this seems an oversimplistic interpretation. Having known only local and limited success for several years, and having cemented reputations which did little to attract managers and agents, the group, once they had tied themselves to Epstein, had little choice but to concur with his strategy.[3] And although, years later, Lennon in particular was scathing about that strategy, he was nonetheless ready to admit his complicity: "We began to sell out when we let Brian begin to manage us. He put us into uniforms —suits—and we would go on and smile and do twenty-minute acts of our hits. . . . [A]ll the rough edges were being knocked off us. I knew what we were doing and I knew the game. So I let it happen" (Connolly 52-53).

In fact, such was the extent of the Beatles' compliance with that strategy, that they were prepared on occasion to allow Epstein some say even in their choice of music, despite an understanding that that was to be their concern alone. In January 1962, at their audition with Decca Records, they unwillingly agreed to reduce the blend of rock 'n' roll and self-compositions which characterized their live performances, in favor of a safer, more familiar selection. Epstein believed that this might be more attractive to record companies. Only three of their own songs were among the fifteen they recorded, which included "September in the Rain," "The Sheikh of Araby," and "Till There Was You." Although, as mentioned above, Decca rejected the group, it was this same audition tape, which, when heard by George Martin in May of that year, sufficiently impressed him to offer the Beatles a recording session with Parlophone. When, five months later, the first song from that recording session entered the Top Twenty, it was a clear vindication of Epstein's policy. When television appearances, radio broadcasts, press interviews, photo sessions, and the demand for live shows began to increase as a result, the group was more than happy to oblige. Less than a year with Epstein had brought them a recording contract, a hit single, the beginnings of national recognition, and regular and better-paid bookings. Those who have criticized the Beatles for their apparent eagerness to compromise by adhering to Epstein's strategy, often do so from the comfort of a musical and organizational context very different from that which existed in the early 1960s and which, ironically, could only have come about as a direct result of the efforts of the Beatles themselves. That their conformity was superficial seems probable in view of the way

in which their later careers were conducted, but it was a carefully calculated conformity which served its purpose admirably. The Beatles were beginning to accumulate credits—credits which were already paying dividends. Liverpool friend Pete Shotton's verdict on Lennon applies equally to the group as a whole: "In 1962 and 1963, the number one priority on John's agenda was to become rich and famous, and tidying up his image seemed, at the time, a relatively small price to pay for the attainment of that goal" (Shotton & Schaffner 73).

Status

> Beatlemania descended on the British Isles in October 1963, just as the Christine Keeler-Profumo scandal fizzled out. It didn't lift for three years, by which time it had covered the whole world. . . . [E]ach country witnessed the same scenes of mass emotion, scenes which had never been thought possible before, and which are unlikely to be repeated. . . . [I]t is impossible to exaggerate Beatlemania because Beatlemania was in itself an exaggeration. (Davies 194)

As discussed above, conformity must incorporate competence (i.e., attempts to conform which fail bring no rewards) and is intimately linked with status in the acquisition of idiosyncrasy credits. From the beginning of 1963 until mid-1966, the achievements of the Beatles, and the consequent status they accrued, departed relatively little in substance from those of other pop stars. The difference lay in the size and scale of their success.

In fact, the Beatles accomplished so much that trying to catalogue their achievements is in many ways a fruitless exercise. The following examples are, therefore, indicative only. In the British singles charts they have spent more weeks (75) in the No. 1 position than anyone else; they remain the act with the most No. 1 singles (18), the most immediate No. 1 singles (8), the most consecutive No. 1 singles (12), the most EP entries (6), the most LP entries (7), the highest-placed LP (No. 11), and the most records in the Top Thirty in the same week (6). In the British album charts, they have spent more weeks in the No. 1 position (167) than anyone else; they remain the act with the most No. 1 albums (14), the most immediate No. 1 albums (9), and the longest unbroken stay in the No. 1 position (50 weeks) (Stannard, 1982). In the United States they

held the top five positions in the *Billboard* singles chart of March 31, 1964, plus an additional seven entries lower in the Top 100. In Australia in the same week, they held the top six positions in the singles chart, with a total of ten in the Top 20. Their appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964, was watched by an audience of 70 million, or 60 percent of all American television viewers; as has passed into mythology, ". . . on that one night America's crime rate was lower than at any time during the previous half century" (Norman 218). During a four-day visit to Japan in June 1966, they were guarded by 35,000 security men (Lewisohn 192). The Lennon-McCartney composition "Yesterday" is the world's most-recorded song. In Britian they had six million-selling singles and three million-selling albums. In the United States they had 20 million-selling singles, one million-selling EP and 21 million-selling albums. Total global record sales are, quite literally, impossible to calculate, but are certainly in excess of one billion records, tapes and compact discs.

Astonishing as these and many other international examples are, it is important to note that the events themselves were well within popular music's catalogue. Other acts had dominated the domestic charts, had attracted large television audiences, had needed extensive security precautions. A few had even been briefly successful in the United States. The Beatles were fulfilling traditional roles and engaging in fairly conventional activities (nationwide tours, radio appearances, Christmas shows, etc); their level of involvement, its success, and the media's response to that success were what set them apart. They were quickly characterized by the popular press as four cheeky but lovable moptops from Liverpool. This frame of reference was overwhelmingly and repeatedly utilized by journalists to explain and celebrate the group, and was sufficiently broad to accommodate minor infringements. Thus, for example, their responses to routine and unimaginative questions at press conferences were intepreted as good-humored Liverpudlian spontaneity rather than crassness or rudeness:

Q. Are you going to have a haircut while you're in America?
A. We had one yesterday.
Q. Will you sing something for us?
A. We need money first.
Q. Was your family in show showbusiness?

A. Well, my Dad used to say my Mother was a great performer.
Q. What do you think of Beethoven?
A. I love him, especially his poems.
Q. Why don't you smile?
A. I'll hurt my lips. (Giuliano 47)

Similarly Lennon's instructions to the audience at the Royal Variety Show in November 1963 ("The ones in the cheap seats clap their hands. The rest of you, just rattle your jewelry") (Davies 198)—was unanimously perceived as adding to their cheeky charm. Indeed, that they were invited to appear in the Royal Variety Show at all (then a much more prestigious event than it has become in recent years) was in itself conclusive proof of the secure and legitimate role they had been allocated in the popular music industry. Photographs of them chatting happily with the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret confirmed their respectability, as did the award of the MBE given to the group members (for services to exports) in 1965 by Harold Wilson.

The award of the MBE highlights the often-neglected fact that in stimulating the "British Invasion" of the United States from 1964 onward, the Beatles, in addition to transforming the ambitions and boundaries of British popular music, not only provided the government with huge sums of revenue, but assured that such funds would continue to flow from the transatlantic earnings of others whose United States success they had facilitated. For some in the music industry, like promoter Arthur Howes, this was the group's most prestigious achievement: "The biggest thing the Beatles did was to open up the American market to all British artists. Nobody had ever been able to get in before the Beatles. They alone did it. By opening up the States, the Beatles made an enormous amount of money for this country" (Davies 230).

A standard demand upon British pop stars in the early 1960s was that they should lend their support to an official fan club. Again, the actions of the Beatles did not merely confirm this expectation, but emphasized and expanded its central facets. From 2,000 members at the beginning of 1963, the recorded membership had reached 80,000 by the end of the year, with many thousands more still waiting for a reply to their applications, held up for months in the deluge of mail to the club's London office (Davies 202). Once the club had been established, the group paid far more attention to it than was the norm. In addition to their

appearing regularly at club conventions, on each of the seven Christmases between 1963 and 1969 members received a festive message/song from the Beatles on records which were never officially released to the general public and which have since amassed considerable value as collectors' items.

The principal contact between performers and their audiences was via touring. In this respect, too, the Beatles did what was expected of them. From 1963 to August 1966, they gave around 500 live concerts, despite their growing dissatisfaction with the constraints such a schedule imposed on them personally and the limitations it placed on their music technically. Harrison was the most disillusioned:

> We got in a rut, going round the world. It was a different audience each day, but we were doing the same things. There was no satisfaction in it. Nobody could hear. It was just a bloody big row. We got worse as musicians, playing the same old junk every day. There was no satisfaction at all. (Davies 232)

That the Beatles persevered for so long under such conditions reflected the organization of an industry which defined touring almost as a contractual duty. The enthusiasm of manager Epstein concerning live shows largely ignored the sentiments of the group themselves: "I find all large gatherings of fans immensely exhilarating and thrilling. I can think of no warmer experience than to be in a vast audience at a Beatle concert. I hope Beatle crowds continue to scream themselves hoarse in a frenzy of exultation" (Epstein 81). What distinguished the circumstances of those tours from those of other artists was their magnitude. In September 1964, they were paid $150,000 for a 35-minute show in Kansas, the highest fee then paid to any entertainer in the United States. In August 1965, their appearance at Shea Stadium, New York, attracted what was at the time the largest audience (56,000) ever to gather at a live concert. During their Australian tour in June 1964, 300,000 fans surrounded their hotel in Adelaide, 250,000 in Melbourne. Virtually every series of concerts in which they participated produced new attendance records, new gate receipt records and new ticket application records.

Similarly, their move into the cinema was in keeping with the industry's expectations of its leading stars. While not challenging the profuse nature of Presley's movie career, Cliff Richard, Adam Faith, Joe

Brown, and Billy Fury had all ventured into what was, in effect, a cost-effective way of exposing the artist to many more fans than could ever be achieved through live performance. When in 1964 the Beatles contracted with United Artists to make *A Hard Day's Night* and, later, *Help!*, this formula was not threatened. Both were filmed quickly and cheaply (*A Hard Day's Night* in six weeks at a cost of £200,000; *Help!* in nine weeks at a cost of £400,000). Although their entry into films was perfectly predictable, what was less expected was the critical acclaim that the two films, especially *A Hard Day's Night*, received. Premiered in the presence of Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon, it drew favorable comparisons between Ringo Starr and Charlie Chaplin, the Beatles and the Marx Brothers, and prompted *Newsweek* to announce that "the legitimacy of the Beatles phenomenon is finally inescapable . . . even Ringo's rings become tokens of something which is somehow important and delightful" (Schaffner 27-28).

In this attempt to demonstrate how the Beatles' status was achieved through a triumphant conformity to existing patterns whose success stretched far beyond any conventional estimations, no better example could be provided than the associated merchandising which grew around their names and images. Although small and loosely organized in comparison to today's global business in rock ephemera, Beatles-related products generated more than $50 million in United States sales alone in 1964. In Britain, Epstein licensed around 100 products including wallpaper, Blackpool rock, bread rolls, chewing gum, bedspreads, trays, wigs, and berets (Coleman, *Brian* 349-50). In the United States, a subsidiary company, Seltaeb, granted licenses to several hundred manufacturers eager to sell bubblebath, nighties, lunchboxes, canned breath, inflatable dolls, dishcloths, masks, and pillows. Among the suggested items rejected were Beatle sanitary napkins and live jeweled beetles (Schaffner 14). The fact that Epstein has been heavily criticized for a lack of rigor in ensuring appropriate royalties for the Beatles stems more from an inability to comprehend and control the huge range of merchandise produced, rather than any lack of interest on his part.

What of the Beatles' music? In what sense can their songs be included in this analysis? Right from the outset of their career, a significant difference between them and other British vocalists and groups was that a majority of their songs—and all their singles—were self-compositions. As early as October 1962, Lennon and McCartney

had written more than 100 songs (Smith 2), many of which had featured in their stage act from 1958 onward. In this respect they resembled the United States rock 'n' roll stars of the mid and late 1950s, whose music they admired and who had introduced the concept of the singer-songwriter to the American popular music charts (e.g., Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Larry Williams, Eddie Cochran, Carl Perkins). The British experience, in contrast, still largely revolved around a belief in the propriety of Tin Pan Alley: the tradition of professional songwriters producing catchy tunes to be sung by attractive young men and women. Once the Beatles had successfully confronted this model, many of the British groups who participated in the "British Invasion" of the United States—the Kinks, the Who, the Hollies—wrote most, if not all, of their songs. Indeed Mick Jagger and Keith Richards reputedly were first persuaded to attempt writing material for the Rolling Stones after witnessing Lennon and McCartney complete "I Wanna Be Your Man" in just five minutes (Scaduto 103).

That the Beatles were instrumental in helping to bring about such a radical change in attitudes toward songwriting in Britain is a substantial achievement. However, in its style, the bulk of their early material was less radical. The archetypal pop song had always been—and arguably still is—the love song: either a celebration of genuine and mutual love, a comment about the nature and meaning of love, or a lament for lost or unrequited love. An examination of the early Beatles singles and album tracks readily confirms these prevalent orderings. Their first nine singles from "Love Me Do"/"P.S. I Love You" (October 1962) to "Ticket to Ride"/"Yes It Is" (April 1965) featured unequivocal love songs on both A and B sides. Furthermore, with the exception of "This Boy" and "A Hard Day's Night," the A and B sides of the first eight singles, either by coincidence or design, contained one or more personal pronouns in their titles, implying a two-way love relationship with which listeners are readily able to identify. In short, these are unashamedly commercial songs: deliberately conformist in their style and structure, undeniably competent in their technique. Commenting on the quintessential Beatles song of this period, "She Loves You," Mellers asserts that:

> the words, if still perfunctorily vacuous, are no longer merely magic talismen, abracadabra. They do concern a basic, life-affirming human experience; and the

conjunction of the words with the music makes evident that this experience matters . . . they (the Beatles) began in apparent parasitism, consciously imitating not merely Chuck Berry, Bill Haley and Elvis Presley, but "anyone from Buddy Holly to Lonnie Donegan, from Frankie Laine to Johnny Ray," and passively accepting the conventions of the pop standard—an eight plus repeated eight bar strain, an eight bar middle, a da capo and occasionally a coda.[4] (Mellers 33)

Their album tracks reveal the same preoccupations. Of the 14 on *Please Please Me* (March 1963), 13 are clearly love songs; so are 12 of the 14 songs on *With the Beatles* (November 1963), all of the 13 songs on *A Hard Day's Night* (August 1964),13 of the 14 songs on *Beatles for Sale* (December 1964), 13 of the 14 songs on *Help!* (August 1965), and 12 of the 14 songs on *Rubber Soul* (December 1965).

The plethora of Ivor Novello awards (five in 1964 alone) presented by the Songwriters Guild of Great Britain to the Beatles is a real demonstration of the degree to which the British popular music industry welcomed their achievements as evidence of pertinent contributions to that industry rather than as a threat to its structures and cultures. And producer George Martin's insight into the character of the early songs suggests that he too, at that stage, was content to encourage them as competent composers of good pop songs:

All I wanted from them was good songs. And those they gave me. At the start I thought: God, this can't last forever. They've given me so much good stuff that I can't expect them to keep on doing it. But they did. They amazed me with their fertility. To begin with, the material was fairly crude, but they developed their writing ability very quickly; the harmonies and the songs themselves became cleverer throughout 1963. (Martin 166)

The cumulative effect of the Beatles' career throughout this period (constructed solidly around the familiar foundations of tours, hit records, television and radio appearances) was that they enjoyed an unparalleled distinction. This was certainly true among the fans who purchased their records in unforeseen quantities and voted for them by overwhelming majorities in the pop music press annual polls. In the 1963 *New Musical Express* poll, for example, the Beatles won the World Vocal Group section with 14,666 votes. In second place were the Everly Brothers with

3,232 votes. In the British Vocal Group section, they won with 18,623 votes; second were the Searchers with 2,169 votes (Davies 204). It was true within the popular music industry, which feted and honored them with equal exuberance; among the trophies they received were ten Ivor Novello awards, eleven Grammys, an Oscar, and three BPI Jubilee awards. And it was equally true among fellow artists. Recognizing status in the Weberian sense to mean honor, prestige, esteem, it is judicious to take note of the opinions of their peers. For if, as Anthony Giddens reminds us, status "depends upon subjective evaluation" (Giddens 41), then such evaluations of the Beatles during this period assume a specific relevance:

Billy Joel: I tell you, if it wasn't for me seeing them that night on *The Ed Sullivan Show* . . . [I] really had no idea that it was possible to be a rock 'n' roll star, until the Beatles.

Sting: I think the Beatles are the reason that I'm a musician.

Brian Wilson: The Beatles hit the music business so hard . . . [I] love the Beatles, I've always loved them.

Justin Hayward: I can remember "Love Me Do," and I can remember exactly where I was when I first heard it. . . . and you knew straightaway with that record that this was something different, and that the world was going to be different after that.

Roger McGuinn: There are so many wonderful songs. . . . [I] really love those songs. And more for their musical value. . . . [T]he chord changes really had magic in them.

Richie Havens: I heard this music coming into the room and I went "Uh-oh. Everything's changed now! Something has happened." And it was "I Want To Hold Your Hand."

Jimmy Page: If it hadn't been for the Beatles, there wouldn't be anyone like us around. . . . [T]hey are the only group I can think of in rock 'n' roll history that improved to such heights from their early days. It was incredible, the way they kept improving. It was like an avalanche. (Somach, Somach & Gunn)

Innovation

The four who stopped running, who stood still at last in 1966, looking curiously about them, were beings such as the modern world had never seen. Only in ancient times, when boy Emperors and Pharoahs were clothed, even fed, with pure gold, had very young men commanded an equivalent adoration, fascination and constant, expectant scrutiny. (Norman 264)

Locating the precise point at which the Beatles began to utilize the credits they had accumulated is impossible. But from mid-1966, one can detect an abandonment of many traditional facets of their career, the emergence of several new strands in their career, and a willingness to involve themselves in activities and debates that went far beyond conventional assumptions about what was considered appropriate for young musicians. That they were able to do this so successfully can be witnessed in the extent to which the roles they began to adopt quickly became inspirational models for musicians around the world. In practice, the Beatles dislodged the foundations upon which the structure of the popular music industry had been built during the previous two decades. As newcomers, they would have been scarcely able to consider such a task, much less to accomplish it. But by 1966 their status and influence, achieved by scrupulous conformity and unchallenged competence in their field of activities, had provided them with a massive deposit of idiosyncrasy credits, against which they were now able to make repeated and substantial withdrawals.

Perhaps the first indication that the Beatles were set to depart from familiar patterns was in the interview Lennon gave to London journalist Maureen Cleave in March 1966, where he predicted: "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first—rock'n'roll or Christianity. Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary" (Coleman, *John Lennon* 247). In their different ways, Little Richard, Elvis Presley, and Cliff Richard had often commented upon the relationship between themselves as entertainers and religion. In presenting his views, Lennon was adding to that debate, and "besides, it was demonstrably true that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus with young people at that particular moment" (Connolly 71). But what made his contribution such a radical departure

from the terms of previous discussions and which resulted in public burnings of Beatles records, death threats from a Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, radio bans of the group's songs, and anti-Beatle rallies across the United States (interestingly there was almost no reaction in Britain) was that he had spoken openly about a facet of the life of a pop star previously rendered invisible. "He violated the taboo that forbids the superstar from calling attention to the fact that he is being treated as if he were the Messiah" (Goldman 246-47). For several years, the Beatles had been treated as Messiahs, as healers, as miracle-workers (a duty associated with live performances which they found particularly unwelcome, but from which it was impossible to extricate themselves, was the routine of receiving handicapped members of the audience backstage before each show). Lennon's subsequent retraction of his statement—"I never meant it to be a lousy anti-religious thing; I apologise if that will make you happy" (Coleman, *Brian Epstein* 320)—cannot easily be construed as a ringing endorsement of the relevance of Christianity, and did little to correct the impression that the group were evolving from lovable moptops into something more autonomous.

A similar reaction greeted McCartney's admission in June 1967 that he had taken LSD. Unrepentant, he, the rest of the Beatles, and Brian Epstein were among the signatories to a full-page advertisement in *The Times* of July 24, 1967, calling for the legalization of marijuana. When, in October of that year, Lennon was convicted at Marylebone Magistrates Court of unauthorized possession of 219 grains of cannabis, and in March 1969, Harrison was convicted at Walton-on-Thames Magistrates Court of possession of 570 grains of cannabis and a quantity of cocaine, the events were as instrumental in elevating the topic of drugs on to the agenda for public discussion as were the deaths (drug-induced or drug-related) of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Brian Jones, and Jim Morrison, and the prison sentences given to Mick Jagger and Keith Richards.

In retrospect the Beatles' decision in August 1966 to stop touring can be interpreted as both cause and effect of many of the changes that were occurring contemporaneously within their careers. Seen as effect, it came about because of a growing dissatisfaction with the conditions of touring and a deep frustration with the constraints that such routines placed upon their musical development. In sum, it reflected the group's disillusionment with the traditional role of pop star. Seen as cause, the

space it created in each of their lives provided the opportunity for them to engage in debates, projects, and relationships that could not have been contained beforehand. Significantly, it reduced the importance of the managerial role of Brian Epstein. On other occasions when the Beatles had spoken of their wishes to cut down on touring, he had managed to persuade them to continue. But following their unanimous decision to stop (their last concert was in San Francisco on August 29, 1966), Epstein's distraught response—"What do I do now? What happens to my life? That's it! Should I go back to school and learn something else?" (Davies 229)—was really a recognition that the group was, in effect, dispensing with his services as manager. Therefore, discarding the guidance which had been such an influence on their success over the preceding five years, and asserting control over the major part of their professional lives. In the 1990s it is not uncommon for artists to manage or comanage their own affairs; it is not uncommon for the most popular entertainers to have lengthy sabbaticals. But at the time the Beatles announced their intentions, it was widely regarded as bewildering and possibly foolhardy: "It was a brave step, in some ways, to give up doing what had made their name. Very few people, certainly in show business, have given up at the height of their adulation . . . . [T]he Beatles had no hesitation" (Davies 233).

Once the Beatles had abandoned the public life of pop stars they were quick to abandon the corresponding visual images. Lennon no longer sought to avoid being seen wearing glasses and promptly jetisonned were the uniforms (collarless jackets or velvet-trimmed suits), the hairstyles, and the clean-shaven faces. The symbolic importance of this superficially trivial shift becomes apparent when one recalls that the conditions to which Ringo Starr had to agree when invited to join the group were to comb his hair forward and shave off his beard (Norman 154).

Until (and in many cases, beyond) the mid-1960s, the concept of a pop group was typically perceived in largely mechanical terms as a unit composed of a number of interrelated components any of which might be replaced. Similarities in dress, appearance, and musical competence helped to emphasize this sense of cohesion and continuity. Personnel changes were relatively uncommon but when they did occur were predictable and unremarkable. The Shadows, the Hollies, Manfred Mann, and the Searchers were among those who had demonstrated that

the career of a pop group could accommodate such potential disruptions with a minimum of inconvenience. Following their decision to end touring, the four Beatles felt free to consciously embark on individual enterprises. Ringo Starr took screen-acting roles in *Candy* (1968) and *The Magic Christian* (1969). McCartney wrote the soundtrack for *The Family Way* (1966) and recorded with the Black Dyke Mills Band (1968). Lennon appeared in *How I Won the War* (1966), and his one-act stage play *In His Own Write* was performed at the National Theatre (1968). Harrison composed the soundtrack for *Wonderwall* (1968) and produced and recorded with the Radha Krishna Temple (1969). While these and many other projects were little more than temporary excursions, they are nonetheless important because of the manner in which they undermined the belief that members of musical groups had nothing valid to do outside the boundaries of their group. By demonstrating the fallacy of that belief, the Beatles began to move toward the construction of four recognizably individual identities rather than one corporate identity. At the same time they were developing a behavioral model for other musicians to comprehend and adopt.

The rate at which the group were allowed to utilize the credits they had amassed in order to sanction such diversions from the prevalent expectations of their role did not weaken, but in fact strengthened, their status; at this stage in the idiosyncrasy credit model, it is nonconformity that serves to increase the influence of leaders. Thus, "the speed at which the Beatles were not only outdistancing but lapping the public" (Salewicz 189) was in itself a source of new credit accumulation.

As might be expected, EMI were unenthusiastic about the Beatles' burgeoning individual aspirations. There was, for example, a strict veto within the industry against artists recording with musicians signed to rival labels. Although accepted today as a routine and mutually beneficial aspect of a popular musician's work role, this interchange of talents was only manageable in the 1960s by keeping covert the full nature of the cooperation. So when McCartney produced "(I'm the) Urban Spaceman" for the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band he adopted the pseudonym of Apollo C. Vermouth. Likewise, when Harrison appeared on Cream's track "Badge" he was billed as L'Angelo Mysterioso. The Beatles were among the first British popular musicians whose activities corresponded with Jeremy Tunstall's description of "competitor-colleagues" within the world of journalism (Tunstall).

The end of touring also coincided with a fundamental shift in the nature of their music. That a song about an aspiring novelist coupled with a song about the weather in which some of the music was recorded backwards ("Paperback Writer"/"Rain") should become the No. 1 record in both the United States and Britain in June 1966, reveals much about the ability of the Beatles to stimulate an audience prepared to consider musical innovation. Their subsequent LP tracks, too, show a similarly radical departure from the conventions of the pop song, beginning with *Revolver*, released in August 1966: "Though *Revolver* still contains ritual elements, one can no longer discuss it in terms of adolescent ceremonial, nor is it relatable to the conventions of commercialised pop music. Halfway between ritual and art, it's both verbally and musically an extraordinary breakthrough" (Mellers 69). A comparison with the content of the earlier albums emphasizes the degree to which the group had abandoned such conventions. Four of the fourteen tracks on *Revolver* (August 1966), one of the thirteen tracks on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (June 1967), none of the six tracks on the *Magical Mystery Tour* EP (December 1967), five of the thirty tracks on *The Beatles* (November 1968), none of the six tracks on *Yellow Submarine* (June 1969), four of the seventeen tracks on *Abbey Road* (September 1969), and two of the twelve tracks on *Let It Be* (May 1970) can be described conventionally as love songs. When contrasted with their earlier albums, this signifies a startling difference: of the album tracks released before 1966, 91 per cent are love songs; of those released from 1966, only 16 per cent are love songs. Replacing the standard two- or three-minute song were compositions which lasted for seven minutes or more ("Hey Jude"), tracks which contained neither singing nor instrumentation ("Revolution 9"), and songs which were over in a few seconds ("Her Majesty"). The topics covered in the songs ranged from memories of Liverpool suburbia ("Penny Lane") to attacks on the Inland Revenue ("Taxman"), from a Victorian circus ("Being for the Benefit of Mister Kite") to an Old English Sheepdog ("Martha My Dear").

Recording, packaging, design, and presentation were innovative, too. Whereas the *Please Please Me* album was recorded in sixteen hours at a cost of £400, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* took more than 700 hours to record and cost £25,000; the cover design alone cost more than £1,500. Almost everything about the *Sgt. Pepper* project indicated

the ease with which the Beatles felt able to challenge prevailing conventions and establish new ones. It was the first record not to be banded into individual tracks. It was the first album whose inner sleeve was not just a white paper envelope but part of the overall package design. It was the first record to have the song lyrics printed in full on the album cover. (It also, incidentally, contained the first Beatles song to be banned by the BBC—"A Day in the Life.") While these characteristics are now commonplace, they were perceived at the time as ill-advised and inappropriate. Epstein wanted to veto the album design in favor of a brown paper jacket, and the decision to print the lyrics aroused stiff opposition from the music publishing industry.

The reactions to the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* showed that the Beatles had promoted the cultural significance of popular music to a level far above the boundaries of the Top Twenty. Kenneth Tynan claimed that the record represented "a decisive moment in the history of Western civilization" (Dowlding 161). Timothy Leary believed that it compressed "the evolutionary development of musicology and much of the history of Eastern and Western sound in a new tympanic complexity" (Dowlding 162). Within popular music, the record elicited immediate recognition that the Beatles were no longer reinforcing but reshaping musical categorizations. John Sebastian declared that "it was like throwing down a hat in the center of a ring, it was a tremendous challenge. . . . [I]t seemed like an almost insurmountable task to come up with anything even in the same ballpark" (Dowlding 162). Brian Wilson stopped work on his planned Beach Boys masterpiece, *Smile*, and went into semiretirement because he felt that with *Sgt. Pepper* the Beatles had done it all (Flippo 236). And Al Kooper believes that it "was the album that changed drumming more than anything else. Before that album, drum fills in rock'n'roll were pretty rudimentary, all much the same. . . . [I]t will always be a great record" (Dowlding 162). Mellers's judgment is conclusive: "*Sgt. Pepper* makes the climacteric point in the Beatles' career, their definite break with the pop music industry, however materially successful the disc may have been. Henceforth, the world they've created is *sui generis*, bringing in its own criteria" (Mellers 101). Groups as diverse as the Monkees (launched as direct copies of each of the four Beatles) and the Rolling Stones, whose reworking of "All You Need Is Love" as "We Love You" and *Sgt. Pepper* as *Their Satanic Majesties Request* drew much criticism

from the Beatles (Wenner 91), were among those who quickly sought to adopt those new criteria.

The death of Brian Epstein in August 1967 represents the disappearance of the last tangible constraint on their later careers. Their involvement with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's philosophy of transcendental meditation lasted for only a few months, but in addition to actively including other artists (Mike Love, Mia Farrow, and Donovan were among those who enthusiastically accompanied the Beatles to Rishikesh, India, to attend the Maharishi's Meditation Center), it helped to bring about the conditions in which pop stars could enjoy the freedom to engage in spiritual debate without being ridiculed. Cat Stevens, Pete Townshend, and Jeremy Spencer were a few among many examples who took advantage of those conditions.

The Beatles' incursion into film making with *Magical Mystery Tour* in 1967 (which was conceived, written, produced, and directed by the group) and the opening of Apple Boutique in Baker Street, London, in the same year, extended their defined spheres of competence into nonmusical but related areas in much the same way that the publication of Lennon's stories and sketches—*In His Own Write* (1964) and *A Spaniard in the Works* (1965)—had done. Their subsequent decision to establish a production and management company (Apple Corps Ltd.) was less predictable. With offices in Savile Row, an initial investment of £800,000, five separate divisions (electronics, films, publishing, records, and retailing), and a declared policy to discover new talent, assist struggling artists, and market inventions, Apple's ambitions were very much broader than previous organizations established by performers to help guide their own and others' careers, such as Frank Sinatra's Reprise record label.

As a business venture, Apple failed and its protracted and unwieldy demise coincided with the eventual dissolution of the group. What Apple did help to initiate, however, was the gradual dismantling of an inflexible and unchanging record industry structure dominated by a small group of five or six companies in which executive control was far removed from individual recording artists. Although it remains true that popular musicians continue to regard themselves as victims of unfair contractual arrangements, it is equally true that the scale of restrictions within which they are expected to work has diminished over the last two decades. Similarly, although a majority of today's independent labels

may be obliged to secure licensing and distribution deals with the majors, the fact that independent labels, studios, and producers exist at all in Britain does derive, at least in part, from the ideas that surrounded the establishment of Apple.

If the award of the MBE to the Beatles represented an idealized ideological relationship between pop star and country, then Lennon's decision to return the medal in 1969 symbolized its irrevocable fracture. Coupled with the group's claims that they had shared a joint in the toilets of Buckingham Palace just before their investiture (Coleman, *John Lennon* 246), the medal's return and the reasons given for it, measured conclusively the space that now lay between the Beatles and the pop stars they had once been:

> Your Majesty: I am returning this MBE in protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam, and against "Cold Turkey" slipping down the charts. With love, John Lennon of Bag. (Coleman, *John Lennon* 324)

Toward a Typology of Stars

> Bob Dylan: I kept it to myself that I really dug them. Everybody else thought they were for the teenyboppers, that they were gonna pass right away. But it was obvious to me that they had staying power. I knew they were pointing the direction where music had to go. (DeCurtis & Henke 212)

My argument has been that in successfully adhering to the demands of a popular music industry largely organized around transient phenomena and immediate expectations, the Beatles quickly constructed a position for themselves of considerable power and influence, their status deriving essentially from their perceived competence. This position allowed them to introduce a range of innovatory features into their activities, which helped to facilitate some fundamental revaluations in perceptions of the durability and significance of popular music. In social psychological terms, they accomplished this by utilizing the deposits of idiosyncrasy credits they had earlier accumulated.

I wish to combine these arguments with the insights offered by Orrin E. Klapp and discussed by Richard Dyer to propose a model of star types within which the progression of the Beatles' career can be

located, and against which the careers of others can be contrasted. Klapp's contention is that the relationship of a star to the prevalent norms can be understood in terms of one of three behavioral categorizations: reinforcement, seduction, and transcendence.

The category of reinforcement equates directly with demonstrations of conformity which act "to reinforce a person in social roles—encourage him to play those which are highly valued—and to maintain the image of the group" (Klapp 219). This description can be applied to much of the earlier portion of the Beatles' career from 1962 to mid-1966.

Seduction involves rule breaking or an infringement of the norms "but in a charming way" (Dyer 27). There is no attempt to create new rules or overturn existing norms, and while it might appear to question particular components of a culture, this role confirms the general relevance of its conventions. Particular aspects of the Beatles' presentation can be located within this category.

Transcendence demands innovation. Traditional assumptions are challenged and replaced, fresh practices are introduced, new philosophies elevated. "This is more than just getting away with something, as in the previous category, since it does redefine and recreate standards by which experience is to be judged" (Dyer 28). This analysis informs the later stages of the Beatles' career from mid-1966 to 1970.

In addition to this ideological dimension of a star's career, I wish to include a second relevant dimension, which is its duration. Clearly, the division between temporary and permanent stardom is much more contentious than the divisions between the ideological categories (although they themselves are not fixed). But however difficult it might be to define the point at which the categories separate, there do undoubtedly exist more than merely intuitive recognitions of the differences between transient and enduring celebrities. In all, therefore, the model incorporates six types:

The Idol. An apparently endless supply of young male singers and musicians has formed the nucleus of much of the British popular music industry's central figures, from Larry Parnes' stable in the 1950s to the Manchester group Take That in the early 1990s. Their careers can range from one hit record (Chesney Hawkes, whose No. 1 hit "The One and Only" in February 1991 was his sole chart entry) to several years of chart success (Bay City Rollers). While the precise conventions they are

Figure 1

A Typology of Stars

IDEOLOGY	DURATION: Temporary	DURATION: Permanent
Conformity	Reinforcement	Idol / Perennial
Deviance	Seduction	Arriviste / Eccentric
Transcendence	Rebel	Innovator

required to reinforce obviously vary over time, their relationship to the industry's dominant ideology remains firm (in terms of sexuality, appearance, and professional activities).

The Perennial. At some point it may become evident that the idol's career has evolved into something more lasting, and that his or her celebrity is no longer solely dependent on hit singles or concert appearances. Cliff Richard, Rod Stewart, Cher, and Tom Jones made this transition. They continue to reinforce the conventional expectations of what a popular musician is permitted to do. Their success depends not only on the ability to retain an audience, but to recruit new ones.

The Arriviste. Defined by his or her ambition, and a willingness to utilize whatever devices are considered appropriate to the satisfaction of that ambition, the arriviste often presents a charming, surprising, or bizarre persona. This serves to distinguish him or her from the conventional idol and is valuable in that it encourages a focusing of media attention. In their different ways, Adam Ant, Gilbert O'Sullivan, and Tiny Tim made use of this strategy; in contemporary classical music, Nigel Kennedy provides a singular example.

The Eccentric. The ability of the arriviste to elongate his or her career cannot be planned with any degree of certainty, which accounts for its sporadic or transient nature. Such attempts are contingent upon continual sequences of new audiences, ready to be shocked, entertained, and seduced. Gary Glitter and Boy George are among the small number of British popular musicians who constantly strive to reinvent and

represent themselves for consumption by an audience not yet bored by the essentially predictable nature of their activities.

The Rebel. By ostentatiously and dramatically defying conventional expectations, the rebel actively generates controversy and hostility. By posing a threat to the existing order, he or she ensures that those excluded from its ranks or disaffected with its operations are likely to be enticed into a consideration of the new possibilities the rebel espouses, be they constructive or nihilistic. Many of the punk bands in the mid 1970s—notably the Sex Pistols—gave a temporary voice to those audiences and artists to whom the excesses of glamrock were offensive and irrelevant.

The Innovator. The articulation of radical explanations, the undermining of seemingly secure conventions, and the capacity to depart from existing modes of behavior—successfully and repeatedly—are as rare within popular music as elsewhere. Genuine innovation derives from a unique combination of artistic and political passions. Bob Dylan is perhaps the finest example of an innovator who has remained competent and active within popular music; much of Frank Zappa's work has been similarly innovative.[5]

Now, if this model is imposed on my analysis of the Beatles' career, then the possibilities for a transfer of roles become apparent. In accumulating a large stock of credits, through conforming to the conventions of the popular music industry, the Beatles were, in effect, fulfilling the role of idol; indeed, that is how they were widely perceived in their early career. Certain behaviors which did appear to conflict with established practice were justified by invoking the category of seduction. These behaviors were thus contained by the construction of an explanation which defined various oddities (long hair, Liverpool accents) as a part of their quirky, novel appeal. Such a rationale did not threaten their acquisition of credits. In utilizing that stock of credits to sanction later behavior which did radically depart from normal practice, the Beatles were able to become innovators; and this is how their contribution to music has been evaluated. It was, therefore, their competence as, and success in, the role of idols—and to a lesser extent that of arrivistes—that allowed them to adopt innovatory behavior.

By contrast, if we seek to impose this model on the career structure of other comparable stars, the route followed by the Beatles is no longer appropriate. The history of Elvis Presley, for example, is best

approached by ideologically referencing the beginnings of his career in the category of transcendence rather than reinforcement. While the Beatles were idols who became innovators, Presley was the rebel who became the perennial, happy to exchange his gold suit and pink Cadillac for seasons at Las Vegas and visits with Richard Nixon. In so doing, Presley's career is an archetypal example of the process that has been termed "revolt into style" (Melly). This approach suggests that throughout much of pop culture (film, television, fashion, design, music, literature) what begins as a revolt against dominant themes will soon, in the process of becoming successful, lose much of its impetus and energy, combining with the very edifices it was challenging to become the dominant style itself, which will in turn face fresh revolts. That Presley not only allowed this to happen but seemed to pursue it deliberately, indicates that although there are comparisons in terms of magnitude and duration between his and the Beatles' careers, there are significant differences in terms of their relationship to the prevalent ideologies of popular music.

Conclusion

Some people seem to find it inherently risible that pop music should be discussed in technical terms at all; when the senior critic of *The Times* wrote the first musically literate piece about the Beatles, it was greeted with hoots of mirth, both from the Beatle themselves and from their hostile critics. This is curious. . . . (Mellers 15)

To offer an analysis of action is not to impute intent where it does not exist. Although I believe that the theory of idiosyncrasy credits provides a suitable avenue through which the Beatles' career can be approached, it should not be used to suggest that the group deliberately and consciously embarked on a decade-long strategy of musical and professional development, throughout which they assiduously collected such tokens in the knowledge that at some point in the future they could be exchanged. Such a suggestion would deserve hoots of mirth.

The career of the Beatles was simply a part—a significant part—of the cultural realignments that were being worked through (particularly by young people) as a result of the coincidence of a number of distinct

factors. In Britain this included the end of conscription, the development of the Pill, expansions in higher education, the growth of teenage spending power, the increased availability of drugs, and opposition to the war in Vietnam. All of these stimulated speculation about the perceived role of many traditional institutions. The Beatles' contribution was, initially, to question and overturn many of the conventional wisdoms within one such institution—the entertainment industry—and from there, because of the interrelated nature of many of the above factors, to participate in critical scrutiny of other institutions, too. That they were able to do this depended on a consensual acknowledgment of their status, which had at first been attained by conformity to agreed behavior and activities. Once this had been achieved, their position, as I have shown, was enhanced by acts which departed from existing norms and which established new ones. Such a process is rare—primarily because those in a position to wield influence for change are those who are most rewarded by a maintenance of the status quo. Innovation and risk-taking carry with them, by definition, the danger of failure. The Beatles' guarantee against the penalties of failure was provided by their accumulation of idiosyncrasy credits, which permitted them, as high-status members of the popular music industry, to deviate from prescribed modes of behavior without fear of sanctions.

Notes

1. Since forming the Monster Raving Loony Party, whose electoral slogan is "Vote for insanity; you know it makes sense," Sutch has contested, and lost, around 40 by-elections in his attempt to become a Member of Parliament.

2. In May 1960, the Silver Beetles auditioned before Larry Parnes for the chance to become Billy Fury's backing group. They were unsuccessful, but, by way of consolation, were hired to back Johnny Gentle on a two-week tour of Scotland.

3. Typical of the counsel given to Epstein when he was about to become the Beatles' manager is this comment from their former manager and promoter, Alan Williams: "My honest opinion, Brian, is this: don't touch them with a fucking bargepole!" (Williams & Marshall 1975, 212).

4. A "da capo" is a recapitulation of the first strain, after the "middle." A "coda" is literally a tailpiece, often repeating material from the middle section.

5. Although it is constructed specifically to help in the analysis of star careers in popular music, I believe that the model is equally relevant when considering other areas of popular culture and contemporary entertainment. Imposing the same categories on the culture of sport, one might, for example, consider the following nominations:

The Idol: Michael Chang, Gabrielle Reece
The Perennial: Jack Nicklaus, Carl Lewis
The Arriviste: Andre Agassi, Zola Budd
The Eccentric: Ilie Nastase, Lee Trevino
The Rebel: Mike Tyson, Charles Barkley
The Innovator: Muhammad Ali, Martina Navratilova

Comparable nominations might suggest themselves in areas such as the cinema, the novel, and comedy.

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CHAPTER TWO

IDEOLOGY, TRAJECTORY AND STARDOM:

ELVIS PRESLEY AND THE BEATLES

IDEOLOGY, TRAJECTORY & STARDOM: ELVIS PRESLEY & THE BEATLES

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Abstract — Résumé

Many references to »stardom« and »the star« in popular music fail to recognise the variety of ways in which such a position may be realised. Moreover, the terms are frequently used to describe processes and performers who are evidently and substantially different in terms of their allegiance to the conventional routines and prevailing practices of the popular music industry. A key perspective in any such analysis must therefore be broadly ideological. By using Hollander's theory of »idiosyncrasy credits« to explain the career of the Beatles, and Melly's exposition of »revolt into style« to understand Elvis Presley's success, it becomes possible to comprehend the career trajectories of popular music's two biggest stars in a way which does incorporate the ideological, by concentrating specifically on their musical and professional activities. In the case of the Beatles, their trajectory developed from early conformity to later non-conformity; in Presley's case, from early non-conformity to eventual conformity. Furthermore, the central concepts of these arguments are then utilised in the construction of a typology of star careers, which is relevant across the complex terrain of popular music.

Introduction

The concept of the star is clearly a central one in any explorations of the themes and processes of popular music. Commentaries on the characteristics of performers, audiences and the entertainment industry have tended to utilise the term in a unified and unproblematic way, implying a consensual and consistent mode of recognition that allows some individuals to be identified as stars, and others not to be so identified.

Many references to *performers* in popular music seem to equate stardom merely with success:

> Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard and Britain's other original rock stars experienced no tension between their skills and their audience, between their music and their success...popularity was the measure of their success as entertainers (FRITH 1978: 164).

Other accounts endeavour to disentangle some of the possible components of such success. Tolleneer's analysis points to

> a small group of professionals...who draw the attention of the passive »consumers« and the mass media by their activities and thus acquire a star status...the star's power of expression, his personality and his outer appearance...also play an important role (TOLLENEER 1986: 231-233).

Similarly, perspectives on the *audiences* for popular music comment routinely on the star-fan relationship, whether focusing on the positive psychological and emotional benefits fans can enjoy:

> A whole set of identifications...for the most part (in the case of Presley and many other rock stars, though not all) produce in the listeners comfortable affirmations of their sense of themselves (BRADLEY 1992: 141)

or on the darker side of such a relationship:

> The rock star is frequently the focus of often unhealthy adulation by fans...In the 1970s the era of the look-alike blossomed, and part of the attraction of attending rock concerts was to look as much as possible like one's idol, for instance, David Bowie. Some fans even went to the lengths of undergoing plastic surgery to achieve this aim (WILLS & COOPER 1988: 107).

And while analyses of the popular music *industry* may present alternative ways of assessing the precise roles of the star — as a self-contained commodity, as a marketing device for encouraging the sale of other commodities, or as both — again, the components of the term itself seem not to be part of that discussion. This can be recognised in Buxton's investigation of the inter-relationship between stars, rock music and consumerism:

> from 1964 onward...rock groups too began to be distinguished on the basis of superficial stylistic features. No form of visual overkill was excluded to make the »product« interesting...rock stars, like commodities, move within a totally designed environment (BUXTON 1990: 436).

And it re-appears in Longhurst's reference to:

> wider themes concerning the ways in which stars function as trademarks which generate sales for the music business and the culture industries more widely (LONGHURST 1995: 185).

From all of these commentaries about stardom there seems to emerge an implicit assumption that the meaning of the term is straightforward and uncontentious, requiring no further elaboration. But it is the absence of any more rigorous analytical pursuit of the concept in these (and many other) examples that diminishes their

reliability. In overlooking the fact that there may be a variety of star types within popular music, these contributions are not so much mis-using the term, but under-using it, inasmuch as they leave unexposed important debates about creativity and control within the music business, about career trajectories followed by performers, and about the links between entertainment and ideology.

Even much postmodernist analysis, which may initially appear to be critical of these traditions, can be seen ultimately to be doing little more than undermining previous attempts at definition or description. In disassembling the concept of the star, such analysis seeks to offer a less coherent, more fluid perspective, characterised by contingency and mobility:

> The star is no longer an individual measured by their creativity, their authentic relation to their performance, or even the possibilities of an audience projecting its fantasies on to them. The star is a commodified and mobile sign, moving across the broad terrain of cultural tastes and entertainment (GROSSBERG 1988: 319).

Madonna, in particular, has attracted much discussion of this nature:

> Madonna's stardom, from *Material Girl* onward, has continued by this same means of elaborate self-referral, both to herself as star and to the processes of stardom (SEIGWORTH 1993: 308).

But there is little attempt to re-assemble the concept in a way which admits the validity of any consistent meaning, or which explores the precise way in which these processes act to define and locate the performer.

What I seek to argue in this paper is that the concept of the star within popular music is neither a universally agreed category nor a decontextualised vagrant, and must be re-organised in a manner which permits a more subtle appreciation of the ways in which »the relationship between artist and audience is mediated and articulated« (LONGHURST 1995: 73). I will argue that the primary level at which this relationship exists is the ideological. To achieve this, I will draw from perspectives on the star contained in studies outside popular music, and apply their insights to arguably the most celebrated, and certainly the most successful, of the stars that popular music has yet produced — Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Within that framework, an analysis of the course of their careers will be utilised in the construction of a typology of stars, based around discrete categories, but allowing for movement between them.

Stardom

The star is ultimately dependent on technology for the achievement and maintenance of his or her status. As Alberoni has observed that »in public-star relationships, each individual member of the public knows the star« (ALBERONI 1972: 77), a mechanism must exist through which that knowledge can be attained. Over the course of the last hundred years or so, a continually evolving system of mass communications has provided that mechanism.

> The star is a recent phenomenon. Music hall singers of the nineteenth century cannot be considered stars in the modern sense of the word. They were rather personalities whose celebrity was rooted in local traditions (BUXTON 1990: 435).

In an important sense, therefore, stars are stars both *of* the media, in that their stardom is conventionally referred to by invoking the precise media form or forms within which they are most active (television, film, records); and *by* the media, since these particular forms represent not only the activities in which they are perceived to excel, but, in addition, through which they are known to the public. Popular music, therefore, provides an especially potent location for the creation of stars, because of the regular forays its practitioners are obliged to make from record into other media, including television, radio, video and cinema.

> Although the emergence of »pop« is often identified with Elvis Presley...it was Bing Crosby who was the first modern star to be created via the connections between radio, records and film. In many respects, Crosby became the archetypal pop star and had a direct impact on the development of the mass entertainment industry (NEGUS 1992: 24).

Since the impact of Crosby in the 1930s, only a handful of popular musicians have achieved the celebrity or success that he did; a list of those who have might include Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Michael Jackson, Madonna. By concentrating on two of those examples — Elvis Presley and the Beatles — I hope to illuminate the relevance of what seems to be an overlooked facet of studies of stardom within popular music. This is the performer's adoption of, and identification with, a generally recognised ideological stance in relation to the conventional wisdoms and routine practices of the industry. This is not incidental to stardom, but a crucial factor in its determination.

In many ways the history of Elvis Presley can be read as a classic re-telling of the American Dream. After initially visiting the Sun Record Company studios in 1953 to record a song as a present for his mother, the nineteen years old truck driver was invited by Sam Phillips to record a song for commercial release. In August 1954, *That's All Right Mama* was a success regionally, and was followed by other hit records in the southern U.S.A. In January 1956, shortly after Presley had agreed a managerial contract with former carnival promoter Colonel Tom Parker, *Heartbreak Hotel* was released on the RCA-Victor label and was a huge success, nationally and internationally, success which continued unabated into the next decade. In November 1956, he starred in *Love Me Tender,* for Twentieth Century Fox, the first of more than thirty movies he would make and which would elevate him, by the early 1960s, into the film industry's biggest box-office attraction. In March 1958, he was conscripted into the U.S. army and during his two-year service his records continued to be released. In March 1960, after his discharge from the army, he withdrew from live performances, choosing instead to concentrate on making Hollywood musicals. In May 1967, he married, and in August 1969 returned to live performances with a season at the International Hotel in Las Vegas; still refusing to perform outside the U.S.A., he became a regular cabaret

entertainer. He was divorced in October 1973, and toured the country extensively until his death, from an accidental drugs overdose, in August 1977.

The story of the Beatles began in July 1957 when John Lennon met Paul McCartney in Woolton, Liverpool, and shortly afterwards invited him to join his group (then known as the *Quarrymen*). In 1958 McCartney introduced Lennon to George Harrison; these three remained the nucleus of the group amidst numerous variations in personnel, changes of name (*Johnny And The Moondogs,* the *Silver Beetles,* the *Beatles*), and a performing history largely confined to Liverpool (with occasional spells in Hamburg) for the next five years. At the beginning of 1962 they agreed to place their management in the hands of local businessman Brian Epstein. In August of that year, having acquired a provisional recording contract with E.M.I.'s Parlophone label, and having replaced drummer Pete Best with Ringo Starr, *Love Me Do* became a minor British hit. In February 1963, *Please Please Me* became the first of their records to top the charts in Britain, and in January 1964 *I Want To Hold Your Hand* was their first record to top the charts in the U.S.A.; for the rest of the decade they dominated popular music around the world. They toured extensively until August 1966 when they elected to abandon live performances in favour of studio work. Epstein died in August 1967, and in 1970, after increasing involvement in individual projects, the Beatles effectively disbanded. John Lennon was shot dead in December 1980 in New York City. The remaining three Beatles still, intermittently, pursue their separate careers.

Elvis Presley: Revolt Into Style

Each successive pop music explosion has come roaring out of the clubs in which it was born like an angry young bull. Watching from the other side of the gate, the current Establishment has proclaimed it dangerous, subversive, a menace to youth, and demanded something be done about it. Something is. Commercial exploitation advances towards it holding out a bucketful of recording contracts, television appearances and world-wide fame. Then, once the muzzle is safely buried in the golden mash, the cunning butcher nips deftly along the flank and castrates the animal. After this painless operation, the Establishment realizes it is safe to advance into the field and gingerly pats the now docile creature which can then be safely relied on to grow fatter and stupider until the moment when fashion decides it is ready for the slaughterhouse. (MELLY 1970: 39).

Melly's extended metaphor is taken from his analysis of the pop arts (including not only music, but film, television, art, radio, theatre) in postwar Britain, and rests upon a simple central assertion. He suggests that each new musical trend or development becomes attractive and successful precisely because of its perceived radical nature. By ostantatiously opposing the established patterns at any one time, its visibility is increased through consequent media inspection; so too are the opportunities it offers to audiences and performers to adopt a stance which invites attention — the stance of rebel.

Clearly, the audience context in which this takes place is a limited one; the worlds of work, schooling, family remain — initially, at least — unlikely to be directly affected. Even for those audience members who do comprehensively pursue the new enticements of such a role via artefacts such as dress, appearance or vocabulary, it is likely that, for many, such activities remain peripheral and occasional. For the creators of the music, the performers themselves — particularly the leading performers — the relevant contexts of their rebellion are much more diffuse, incorporating income, occupation and personal identity. And because of the centrality of pop music for the young, performers and audiences are often perceived to be engaged in a joint venture in which the performers are characterised not merely as purveyors of entertainment-related products, but as spokespersons for national, even global, cohorts of young audiences.

> Rock'n'roll, crude and emotionally limited as it was, established an important principle: the right of the underprivileged young to express themselves with a freedom and directness which until then had been considered the prerogative of their elders and betters...Presley and Haley seemed to speak for them, and out loud (MELLY1970: 38).

While this perception of certain artists may run counter to the ideology of the popular music industry, for whom its leading performers do primarily remain purveyors of entertainment-related products, it is a perception widely encouraged by the industry, exactly and ironically because of its commercial advantage.

> Any pop movement, at least during its initial and most profitable stages, is attractive precisely because it is believed to propose a revolt against the adult mores and, if it is to be milked, it's necessary to preserve at least the illusion of that revolt (MELLY 1970: 39).

But as the postwar histories of all popular cultural forms have repeatedly demonstrated, this initial, radical phase, which provokes hostility from, and is defined as a threat to, the conventional order, is always a temporary phenomenon. Several factors coalesce to ensure this. Amongst the audience, there will be the emergence of new generations who reject the music favoured by their elder brothers and sisters. Amongst the performers, increased success may lead to dwindling enthusiasm as the rebellious nature of the music and its performance becomes mundane and predictable. And within the popular music industry (like any other industry), the quest to achieve and consolidate a long-term financial success — as opposed to a short-term profit, however handsome — demands routinisation and control:

> The entrepreneurs want money, and the best way to make the most money out of pop is to preserve at least the semblance of order (MELLY 1970: 39).

The combination of these forces creates a pattern that can be recognised across the whole range of contemporary artistic and cultural endeavour. What begins as a revolt against dominant themes will soon, in the process of becoming successful, lose much of its impetus and energy, combining with the very edifices it appeared to challenge to become the dominant style itself...which will, in turn, face fresh revolts. Popular music in this respect is distinguished not by its uniqueness but by the clarity with which it illustrates this process.

This analysis has much in common with the Marxist notion of incorporation, which refers to the conscious channeling of radical political or economic activities into existing institutions so as to minimise the threat they might pose to the established order were they to remain outside that order and thus outside its control..

Several observations have to be made, however, about the suitability of this sort of theorising for accounts of popular music. First, within pre-defined parameters of organisational control, the popular music industry does not fear new, potentially disruptive themes, but welcomes them. Blake's claim that »a single musical style simply cannot encompass the many ways in which music is used within a single culture« (BLAKE 1992: 118) emphasises the importance of the industry's constant attempts to anticipate and meet the demands of not just domestic but global audiences who are characterised by ever-increasing cultural diversity. This responsibility devolves to the artist and repertoire department of every recording label.

> The artist and repertoire department is the repository of knowledge about past, present and future musical trends and stylistic developments. Staff in the A and R department constantly monitor changes among established artists, the new acts that are being acquired by other companies, and attempt to follow developments amongst various audiences and subcultures (NEGUS 1992: 47).

Secondly, it is not at all certain that complete incorporation of what might be seen as oppositional themes into the established order is so straightforward, even if vigorously pursued. Elsewhere, this general point has been discussed, for example, in the context of the emerging working class in nineteenth century Britain:

> direct indoctrination into the dominant ideology and the somewhat less direct absorption of dominant values via cultural hegemony were never as successful as some have held (ABERCROMBIE et al. 1980: 111).

And it is a point which is directly applicable to the contemporary entertainment industry, particularly as so much of popular music has, historically and currently, significant associations with social class (and ethnicity).

Thirdly, the process of incorporation assumes an *integration* of new styles into the dominant ideology, which remains itself relatively unchanged. The processes through which this is achieved may involve a variety of strategies — compulsion, persuasion, appeals to self-interest, indoctrination — but ultimately the result is the retention of the existing system or systems. Melly's analysis, however, posits a different outcome in which the success of the new theme or style leads to the toppling of the existing dominant style and its *replacement*...until it, too, is inevitably challenged, undermined and replaced. What emerged as a revolt becomes, temporarily, at least, the style.

Support for the contention that Elvis Presley's career can be comprehended using this approach is evident in the strategy for commercial success outlined by the founder and head of the Sun Record Company, Sam Phillips, long before he had met Presley or heard his singing:

> »If I had a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars!« (HOPKINS 1972: 47).

This in itself was an extraordinary proposal. In the early 1950s, the idea of fusing the commercial appeal of a white performer and the musical tradition of black rhythm'n'blues challenged almost all of the American music industry's working practices.

> Having ignored black music for a number of years, the majors had lost touch with recent developments in the rich and constantly evolving black culture... black musicians based in the South West were developing styles that were much closer to the blues ... described by Baraka as »huge rhythm units smashing away behind screaming blues singers«. This was rhythm and blues. Since it did not lend itself readily to the production styles of the major labels, they decided to ignore the relatively smaller black music (GAROFALO & CHAPPLE 1978: 77).

Assumptions about the desirability (and inevitability) of continuing to regard as quite separate the type of music performed by black/white artists were reflected in similar sentiments about the distinctions between audiences, the record labels producing such music, the record charts in which musical sales were compiled, even the radio stations on which it was played. Although white music stations had gradually begun to broadcast some rhythm'n'blues records to satisfy the potential audience for black music in northern cities, Cohn maintains that generally:

> Right through the early fifties...white stations persisted in blocking rhythm'n'blues off their airways, and the biggest names were still people like Doris Day, Perry Como and Frankie Laine (COHN 1969: 15).

Presley's first record for the Sun label was his cover version of *That's All Right Mama,* a song written and recorded in the 1940s by Arthur (Big Boy) Crudup, a black country blues singer. Significantly, Sam Phillips took the record to Station WHBQ's disc jockey Dewey Phillips (no relation) whose *Red Hot And Blue* radio show was devoted to the work of black blues artists. When Presley was interviewed on the show, Dewey Phillips thought it necessary to stress that he had attended the all-white Humes High School, since audience responses had clearly shown that many listeners had automatically assumed the singer to be black.

If his vocal performance was perceived as radical, Presley's physical performances were in many quarters seen as positively obscene. Hopkins has described a typical Presley concert appearance:

> Draped in white slacks with a pink stripe down the sides, a pink shirt with the collar turned up catching the ends of his longish hair, and a pink sports jacket with big black teardrops on the front and back...he leaned forward, legs braced, guitar hung around his neck, hands clutching the stand microphone. He looked at the girls in the front row with lidded eyes, eyebrows forming a loving and woeful arch...Now both legs were twitching - jerking and snapping back into that original braced position...his arms flailed the inexpensive guitar, pounding the wood...and snapping strings...The girls began to squirm and move (HOPKINS 1972: 83-84).

Quickly given the nickname Elvis the Pelvis, it soon became apparent that to the entertainment and media establishment, his was a success to be devalued and vilified. His appearance on *The Milton Berle Show* in January 1956 prompted Jack Gould, television critic of the *New York Times* to describe him as an »unutterable bore...a rock'n'roll variation of one of the most standard acts in show business: the virtuoso of the hootchy-kootchy...his one speciality is an accented movement of the body...the gyration never had anything to do with the world of popular music and still doesn't.« And Jack O'Brien of the *New York Journal-American* proclaimed that »he can't sing a lick, makes up for vocal shortcomings with the weirdest and plainly planned, suggestive animation short of an aborigine's mating dance.«

From 1956 to 1958, Presley's career within the entertainment industry continued to oppose traditional definitions and expectations of its leading practitioners. Rock'n'roll concerts were banned in cities across the U.S.A., from Asbury Park, New Jersey to Santa Cruz, California. Religious leaders, including Cardinal Spellman and evangelist Billy Graham, were overtly hostile to Presley, claiming links between rock'n'roll and juvenile crime. Some radio stations refused to play his records. During his appearance on *The Ed Sullivan TV Show* in September 1956, he was televised only from the waist up, so as to avoid the possibility of charges of encouraging obscene behaviour being brought against the C.B.S. network. In October 1956, the singer appeared in court in Memphis after being involved in a fight with the manager of a petrol station. And the *New York Daily News* described his music as a »barrage of primitive jungle-beat rhythm set to lyrics which few adults would care to hear.«

But such was the impetus of the manner in which Presley contravened contemporary definitions of the pop star that such reactions only served to encourage more and more radical departures, and to lead to an exponential growth of his success, nationally and internationally. Following his appearance on *The Ed Sullivan TV Show,* R.C.A. simultaneously released seven of his singles; it was at the time a unique decision, and although in marketing and promotional terms it was considered certainly audacious and probably foolish, each of them sold more than one hundred thousand copies in the U.S.A. alone. At the end of 1956 it was reported in the *Wall Street Journal* that sales of Elvis Presley merchandise had reached twenty-two million dollars in just six months. And by 1958, at the age of 23, he had achieved no less than twenty separate million-selling singles.

One of the principal components of Melly's exposition is that rebellion is relatively, and necessarily, short-lived. Socio-cultural processes of containment begin to operate, ensuring either that the rebellion is defeated, or, if it is perceived to pose a real threat, finds its way into the existing structures. The conscription of Elvis Presley into the U.S. army in March 1958 provided manager Colonel Tom Parker with the opportunity to avoid the former option by consciously manipulating the latter. In effect, his enlistment was the first and crucial step in dismantling the dangerous and delinquent persona of Elvis the Pelvis, by utilising his army service to depict him as the patriotic boy-next-door, before eventually re-inventing him as the wholesome family entertainer. The strategy soon began to work.

> The new Elvis »image« was being accepted. Adults began to accept him because he was going to get his hair cut, start dressing like a human being (in uniform), said he was going to serve like any other boy, and stopped shaking publicly (HOPKINS 1972: 165)

The public outpourings of his grief at his mother's funeral in March 1958 and regular, positive and carefully choreographed media coverage of the activities of Private Presley on active service in Germany contrasted sharply with the hostile media attentions of previous years, and contributed to the public confirmation of this new identity. Estimated earnings of two million dollars in 1958 indicated that the strategy was successful in commercial terms, too.

The definitive gesture marking the shift in trajectory of Presley's career can be seen to be the decision to select Frank Sinatra's A.B.C. television show in May 1960 as the vehicle through which to re-introduce him to the viewing public, once his army service had been completed. It was Sinatra who, in 1957, had described rock'n'roll as »phoney and false, and sung, written and played for the most part by cretinous goons.« That Presley should consent to appear on television in a formal dinner jacket, swapping songs, and duetting with Sinatra, would have been unthinkable prior to his conscription. But the impact was remarkable. »Just like that, Elvis became an entertainer.« (FLIPPO 1993: 41).

More evidence of the repudiation by Presley of his pre-military career followed swiftly. After the ballad *Stuck On You,* which was the first single he recorded and released on his return from Germany, the subsequent few singles were contextually inimical to the style of his early rock'n'roll recordings. *It's Now Or Never* (July 1960) was a re-working of the popular Italian aria *O Sole Mio,* recorded by, among others, Caruso and Mario Lanza, and composed by Di Capua & Capurro. *Are You Lonesome Tonight* (November 1960) was written by Dave Dreyer, whose other compositions included *Me And My Shadow,* and was originally recorded by Al Jolson in the 1920s. *Surrender* (February 1961) was Presley's version of *Torna A Surriento,* another classical Neapolitan song, composed by Ernesto de Curtis. In addition, *Wooden Heart* (December 1960), which was only released in Europe, was based on a traditional German folk song from the eighteenth century. Far from undermining his success, these records spectacularly increased it, as he began to recruit fans from a wider and more conservative musical audience; *It's Now Or Never* became, in fact, his most successful single, selling more than twenty-two million copies worldwide, and, in commercial terms, vindicated absolutely the career shift.

> The song remains in many listeners' minds as a conscious choice by Elvis to finally transcend the limitations of being labelled a rock'n'roll singer, and to establish his own middle ground, from which he could easily move in any musical direction (FLIPPO 1993: 41).

Just as significant were the comparisons made by film director Norman Taurog, when working with Presley on *G.I. Blues* in 1960, and who went on to direct several more of his movies through the decade: »This is the most relaxed boy you could want. He reminds me of Crosby and Como.« (HOPKINS 1972: 198).

The certainty with which all commentators have agreed on the implications of this radical disruption to Presley's career trajectory — and the connections with his perceived ideological stance — is recognised by Hammontree:

> In fact Elvis was more popular when he returned from the army than he had been before...Elvis's willingness to serve as an ordinary soldier in the U.S. army had somehow legitimized him to many adults, and he was viewed as a more traditional young man...It was his music which had been unorthodox — the music and his uninhibited behaviour while singing. His time in the army served as a symbol to many that Elvis was just an all-American boy, and he became the new Huck Finn of America (HAMMONTREE 1985: 39).

Having thus embarked on a new career phase, characterised by demonstrations of reassurance rather than rebellion, the decision was quickly made to withdraw from all live performances. In February 1961, he was the main attraction (on a bill which included comedians and jugglers) at two benefit concerts in Memphis which raised fifty-two thousand dollars for charities in the city, and for which, in gratitude, he was invited to an official endorsement of his charitable activities before both houses of the Tennessee state legislature. In March of the same year he performed in Hawaii, raising sixty-seven thousand dollars for the memorial fund of the U.S.S. Arizona, the battleship sunk by Japanese bombers during the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. His patriotic duty done, Presley ended his musical performances for the rest of the decade to become, in effect, a Hollywood movie star. While the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, the Doors, the Beach Boys invested the 1960s with the same sort of musical and cultural energy which had characterised Presley himself in the 1950s, he retired to his Bel Air mansion to make twenty-seven films between his release from the army and his subsequent return to performing. Very few attracted any positive critical responses.

> His films settled into predictable, pallid productions...requiring little intellectual participation, they adhered to a strict code, avoiding excessive violence and sexual suggestiveness; and the story lines showed life as simple and optimistic in tone... Most of the songs, unfortunately, were inane numbers written to suit a part of the film and were hopelessly dull if heard outside that context (HAMMONTREE 1985: 43-44).

In archetypal terms, much of Presley's musical output through the 1960s can be defined as the style against which the Beatles and others concentrated their revolt. Widely accused of squandering his talent, in fact Elvis Presley was both victim and accomplice of a process which deliberately and specifically involved a containment of his abilities within parameters which stressed the association between music and ideology. Some final examples clarify this.

In August 1969, while five hundred thousand young Americans were celebrating in the mud of Woodstock their fusion of music, drugs, opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, sexual liberation and political confrontation, Presley chose the same month to make his long-awaited return to live performance at the International Hotel Show Room, Las Vegas — the definitive symbol of affluent middle America, and the global capital of the marriage between show business and

gambling. His award of Entertainer Of The Year at Las Vegas in 1969 identified and corroborated his status.

The following year he visited President Richard Nixon at the White House, claiming to have carried out »an in-depth study of drug abuse and Communist brain-washing techniques« (HUTCHINS & THOMPSON 1994: 164) and offering himself as an undercover Federal Agent for the Bureau of Narcotics & Dangerous Drugs. Shortly afterwards he visited F.B.I. Headquarters in Washington where he described the Director, J. Edgar Hoover, as »the greatest living American«, and again offered his services as an undercover informant against what he described as:

> »persons in the entertainment industry...(who)...have a lot to answer for in the hereafter for the way in which they have poisoned young minds by disparaging the United States in their public statements and unsavoury activities.« (HUTCHINS & THOMPSON 1994: 172).

In August 1971, the National Academy Of Recording Arts & Sciences bestowed upon Presley its highest honour - the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is not an annual event; the only previous recipients (and the musicians with whom he was now being artistically and symbolically bracketed) were Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Irving Berlin.

In the same year, an even more remarkable set of companions awaited Presley's participation at the ceremony for »the award that meant the most to him« (FLIPPO 1993: 54). The United States Junior Chamber Of Commerce proclaimed him one of »The Ten Outstanding Young Men Of The Nation«. The others were Walter S. Humann, an executive of the U.S. Postal System; White House aide Ron Ziegler; Harvard biophysicist Dr Mario Capecchi; Medal of Honor winner and West Point professor Captain William Bucha; radio station magnate Jim Goetz; National Cancer Institute scientist Dr George Todaro; Thomas Atkins, the first black city councilman in Boston; Wendell Cherry, part-owner of the Kentucky Colonels basketball team; and Thomas Coll, the founder of the Revitalization Corps. There could be no more emphatic demonstration of the success with which the young rock'n'roll singer from Memphis, who had so threatened the established order just fifteen years earlier, had sought entry and been admitted to the very establishment that had previously dismissed and scorned him.

> The most important thing that the award represented for Elvis was the acceptance — the recognition — by the American social establishment. It was a validation of his life and work. (FLIPPO 1993: 54).

The Beatles: Idiosyncrasy Credits

> Idiosyncrasy credits...may be considered to be the positive impressions...held by others. These credits represent accorded status. They have the property of allowing nonconformity, innovation, and the assertion of influence. Basically, credits accumulate as a result of perceived conformity and competence (HOLLANDER 1976: 485).

Hollander's theory of idiosyncrasy credits, developed as an explanation of patterns of leadership, has much to offer when utilised to provide an analysis of the career trajectory of the Beatles. Within the context of small groups, Hollander contends that regular and unambiguous demonstrations of conformity to prevailing norms and expectations are a crucial component in enabling an individual to create favourable impressions, and thus to secure a place within the group. The greater the degree of conformity displayed by the individual, the greater the status he or she subsequently enjoys; conformity and status are in this sense mutually dependent. This may be particularly true for newcomers striving to establish entry and maintain membership.

In addition, an individual's adherence to group norms needs to be accompanied by evidence of agreed levels of competence or performance of central group activities. Competence and conformity are, then, in Hollander's model, used to acquire credits in the eyes of other members of the group; credits reflect respect and are symbolically exchanged for increased status. Those individuals who have amassed most credits in this way (i.e. those who enjoy the greatest status) may become leaders.

It is here that the importance of the idiosyncratic element of these credits becomes apparent. Persons possessing a store of such credits are permitted to deviate, to exhibit non-conformist or idiosyncratic behaviour without risking the disapproval of the group. Acquired credits represent a balance or investment against which such transgressions can be safely enacted. Each transgression can only be tolerated to the extent that the individual holds sufficient credits to cover such behaviour; »by definition, affiliation with the group...ceases when the individual's credit balance reaches zero« (HOLLANDER 1958: 121)

But for those who have become leaders, the significance of engaging in idiosyncratic or innovative behaviour is much more emphatic. Such behaviour is not only tolerated, or even encouraged; it becomes a formal requirement if they are to maintain their status.

> With a constant level of competence, the person's early non- conformity to procedural norms should depress his or her influence. On the other hand, late evidence of non-conformity, after credits are accumulated, should produce the reverse effect. Once having attained higher status, there should be a shift in expectancies, which actually makes procedural non-conformity a confirming feature of status, thereby increasing influence (HOLLANDER 1976: 485-486).

According to Hollander's analysis, therefore, it would appear that once a certain number of credits has been accumulated by the individual, the group's expectations of him or her change. Whereas before, non-conformity was not tolerated and might be penalised, now it is expected and rewarded; risk-taking, departure, innovation are obligatory; they become the major ways in which aspiring or actual leaders can maintain their status and add to their influence. Leaders who fail to engage in such activities may in fact face the very penalties they would have incurred had they chosen to engage in those activities when their store of credits was lower. Indeed, Hollander draws attention to the fate of »a leader who...adopts a

passive and ostensibly safe course, but *loses* status« (HOLLANDER 1958: 126). The fact that a newcomer to the group, whose credit balance is relatively low, will *gain* status by adopting a passive and ostensibly safe course serves to emphasise what Hollander judges to be:

> the key consideration in the idiosyncrasy model...that behaviour perceived to be non-conforming for one group member may not be perceived as such for another (HOLLANDER 1976: 485).

These then are the principal components of Hollander's theory, one of the major attractions of which is undoubtedly its simplicity. However, a number of points require clarification. First, as discussed by Donelson R. Forsyth (1983), the acquisition of a large balance of credits does not grant the individual unrestricted freedom to deviate wildly from the group's ideology. Individuals can go too far, their behaviour can be too extreme, such that it immediately exhausts their credit balance. A second, related issue centres on ways in which the motivation for radical behaviour is evaluated by group members. Ridgeway (1978, 1981) has pointed out that behaviour perceived as self-oriented, rather than co-oriented, is less likely to be rewarded with increased status; there is a real risk that acts of non-conformity, if interpreted by others as generated by selfish motives, will lead to substantial deficits in an individual's credit balance and a loss of his or her status.

Thirdly, it should be emphasised that a person who possesses a large store of credits will not automatically or inevitably emerge as a leader; he or she merely has the opportunity to do so. Similarly it is not guaranteed that those persons who become leaders will engage in innovative or radical behaviour; again, they merely have the opportunity to do so without fear of sanctions:

> It should not be supposed that an abundance of credits must lead perforce to influence. While an individual thus endowed has the potential to display more idiosyncratic behaviour than others, he might not do so, nor would he of necessity become a leader thereby (HOLLANDER 1958: 125).

A fourth point relates to the failure by Hollander to distinguish adequately between what I would term authentic conformity, where commitment to the group is genuine and »motivation to belong is both high and sincere« (HOLLANDER 1958: 126); superficial conformity, where false demonstrations of loyalty may be made in order to secure membership and make additional gains; and erroneous conformity, where (rather like the conditions in adolescent delinquent subcultures discussed by Matza) individuals are actors in a comedy of errors, each mistakenly believing that all other members are truly committed to group norms, and who therefore act in a like way themselves (MATZA 1964). However, since the theory rests upon the recognition and evaluation of behavioural outcome rather than behavioural intent, there is an argument that these may be relatively unimportant distinctions.

I believe that in a general sense, Hollander's theory can be transferred from the study of small, task-specific groups into the useful analysis of patterns of radical and innovative behaviour within the entertainment industry; and that in a particular and precise way, it can help in the understanding and explanation of the musical career of the Beatles.

When Brian Epstein acquired the management of the Beatles in 1962, he did so at a time when the structures and cultures of the British popular music industry offered little hope of accommodating such groups. The reason given by Decca's Head of Artists & Repertoire, Dick Rowe, to Epstein when rejecting the Beatles, typifies succinctly the industry's concern to persevere with what it perceived as appropriate practices:

> »Not to mince words, Mr Epstein, we don't like your boys' sound. Groups are out, four piece groups with guitars particularly are finished. The boys won't go, Mr Epstein. We know these things. You have a good business in Liverpool. Stick to that.« (EPSTEIN 1964: 51).

As a result of this and other rebuffs, Epstein quickly decided that in order for the Beatles to realistically contemplate careers in popular music, it was essential that they should begin to create favourable impressions within the industry. By agreeing to conform to many of the routines and expectations prevalent within that environment, the group thus can be seen to have embarked on a stage in their career which would result in an increasing acquisition of idiosyncrasy credits. Thus it was that Epstein forbade certain forms of behaviour - smoking, eating, drinking, swearing - on stage. Their leather jackets and jeans were replaced by mohair suits, shirts and ties. He insisted they bow to the audience at the end of each song. He went to great lengths to conceal Lennon's marriage to a pregnant Cynthia Powell, lest it damaged the group's image. He rationalised and re-structured their live performances, insisting on a set routine planned in advance. And although, years later, John Lennon was scathing about that strategy, he was nonetheless ready to admit his complicity:

> »We began to sell out when we let Brian begin to manage us. He put us into uniforms — suits — and we would go on and smile and do twenty-minute acts of our hits...All the rough edges were being knocked off us. I knew what we were doing and I knew the game. So I let it happen.« (CONNOLLY 1981: 52-53).

In fact, such was the extent of the Beatles' compliance with that strategy, they were prepared on occasion to allow Epstein some say even in their choice of music, despite an understanding that that should be solely their concern; in January 1962 at their audition with Decca Records, they reduced the blend of rock'n'roll and self compositions which characterised their live performances in favour of a safer, more familiar selection, including *September In The Rain, The Sheikh Of Araby* and *Till There Was You.* Although Decca rejected the group, it was this same tape which when heard by George Martin in May 1962, sufficiently impressed him to arrange a recording session with Parlophone. When, five months later, *Love Me Do,* the first song from that session became a hit, it was a clear vindication of Epstein's policy and the group's willingness to conform. When television appearances, radio broadcasts, press interviews, photo sessions and the demand for live shows began to increase as a result, the Beatles were more than happy to oblige. They were beginning to accumulate credits — credits which were already paying dividends. Liverpool friend Pete Shotton's verdict on Lennon applies equally to the group as a whole:

> In 1962 and 1963, the number one priority on John's agenda was to become rich and famous, and tidying up his image seemed at the time a relatively small price to pay for the attainment of that goal (SHOTTON & SCHAFFNER 1983: 73).

As discussed above, conformity must incorporate competence, and is intimately linked with status in the acquisition of idiosyncrasy credits. From the beginning of 1963 until mid-1966, the achievements of the Beatles, and the consequent status they accrued, departed relatively little in substance from the experiences of other leading performers in popular music or from the conventional ideology of the music industry. The difference lay in the size and scale of their success, framed within the phenomenon which became known as Beatlemania.

> Each country witnessed the same scenes of mass emotion, scenes which had never been thought possible before, and which are unlikely to be repeated...it is impossible to exaggerate Beatlemania because Beatlemania was in itself an exaggeration (DAVIES 1968: 194).

In fact, the successes of the Beatles in this period were so pronounced that it is possible only to provide examples as an indication of their volume. In Britain, they have spent longer in the Number One position in both the singles charts (75 weeks) and the album charts (167 weeks) than any other performer; they had six million-selling singles and three million-selling albums. In the U.S.A., they had twenty-eight million-selling singles, one million-selling E.P. and twenty-one million selling albums; in the week of March 31, 1964, they held the top five positions in the singles charts plus an additional seven entries lower in the Top 100. Their appearance on the *The Ed Sullivan TV Show* on February 9, 1964, was watched by an audience of seventy milllion, or sixty per cent of all American television viewers; as has passed into mythology, »on that one night, America's crime rate was lower than at any time during the previous half century« (NORMAN 1981: 218). In September 1964, they were paid 150,000 dollars for a 35-minute show in Kansas, the highest fee then paid to any entertainer. In August 1965, their appearance at Shea Stadium, New York, attracted what was at the time the largest audience (56,000) ever to attend a live concert. In 1964 alone, Beatles-related merchandise generated more than fifty million dollars in the U.S.A. In Australia, they held the top six positions in the singles chart of March 31, 1964, with a total of ten in the Top Twenty. In June of that year, 300,000 fans surrounded their hotel in Adelaide, 250,000 in Melbourne. In Japan, during a four-day visit in June 1966, they were guarded by 35,000 security men. The Lennon-McCartney composition *Yesterday* is the world's most recorded song, with more than 2,500 versions.

Each event within their career during these years conformed — precisely and triumphantly — to the demands of the popular music industry; and they were rewarded accordingly. Their appearance on *The Royal Variety Show* in 1963, their selection in 1964 as the Variety Club of Great Britain's *Show Business Personalities Of The Year,* the award to the group of the M.B.E. in 1965, demonstrated and consolidated the overwhelmingly positive response to their behaviour from the entertainment industry. The group's entry into films (*A Hard Day's Night* in 1964, *Help!* in 1965) and their reliance on touring as the principal contact between artist and

performer (from 1963 to mid-1966 the Beatles gave around five hundred live performances) also showed solid signs of reliability and commitment to the prevailing ethos. The enthusiasm with which the media and entertainment establishment embraced the Beatles can be discerned from the sentiments contained in a lead editorial in the *Daily Mirror* in November 1963:

> You have to be a real sour square not to love the nutty, noisy, happy, handsome Beatles...If they don't sweep your blues away — brother, you're a lost cause. If they don't put a beat in your feet — sister, you're not living. The Beatles are whacky. They wear their hair like a mop — but it's washed, it's super-clean. So is their fresh young act (NORMAN 1981: 192).

In sum, the cumulative effect of the Beatles achievements during this stage of their career was that they enjoyed an unparalleled distinction. This was true among the *fans* who purchased their records in unforeseen quantities and generated record ticket applications with every new set of performances. It was true within the popular music *industry* which feted and honoured them repeatedly; in 1964, for example, they received two *Carl Allen Awards,* five *Ivor Novello Awards* from the Songwriters' Guild of Great Britain, and two *Grammy* awards from the American National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences. And it was true among fellow *performers* whose evaluations of the Beatles' contributions to popular music were — and remain — staunchly positive:

> Graham Nash: ...the Beatles had it all. They not only had the music, they had the looks, and more importantly, they had the vibe.
>
> Chris Hillman: The Beatles influenced all of us, vocally, and songwriting, and everything else.
>
> Todd Rundgren: ...of course the biggest influence of all was the Beatles...it involved much more than music. It was a whole connection with your peers. (SOMACH & SHARP 1995)
>
> Brian Wilson: The Beatles hit the music business so hard...I love the Beatles. I've always loved them.
>
> Jimmy Page: If it hadn't been for the Beatles, there wouldn't be anyone like us around. (SOMACH, SOMACH & GUNN 1989).

Having achieved (via competence and conformity) a status which had elevated them to an unrivalled position of authority within popular music, the Beatles were at this stage in their career able to actively consider innovation and departure from the dominant ideology that the acquisition of idiosyncrasy credits makes possible. Locating the precise point at which they began to utilise these credits is impossible, but from mid-1966, one can detect an abandonment of many of the traditional facets of a pop star's career, the emergence of several new strands in their career, and a willingness to involve themselves in activities and debates that went far beyond conventional assumptions about what was considered appropriate for young musicians. In practice, what they began to do was to dislodge the foundations upon which the structure of the popular music industry had been built during the previous two decades.

Perhaps the first indication that the Beatles were set to depart from familiar patterns was in the interview Lennon gave to London journalist Maureen Cleave in March 1966, where he predicted:

> »Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first — rock'n'roll or Christianity. Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary.« (*Evening Standard:* March 4, 1966).

In Britain, the interview attracted little comment, but in the U.S.A. it led to radio bans, anti-Beatle demonstrations and the threat of concert cancellations. Forced to apologise, Lennon's retraction of his statement — »I never meant it to be a lousy anti-religious thing; I apologise if that will make you happy« (COLEMAN 1989: 320) — did little to correct the impression that the group were evolving from recognisable pop stars into something more autonomous.

A similar reaction greeted McCartney's admission in June 1967 that he had taken L.S.D. Unrepentant, he, the rest of the Beatles and Brian Epstein were among the signatories to a full-page advertisement in *The Times* of July 24, 1967, calling for the legalisation of marijuana. When in October of that year, Lennon was convicted at Marylebone Magistrates Court of unauthorised possession of 219 grains of cannabis, and in March 1969, Harrison was convicted at Walton-on-Thames Magistrates Court of possession of 570 grains of cannabis and a quantity of cocaine, the events were as instrumental in placing the topic of drugs on the agenda for public discussion as were the deaths (drug-induced or drug-related) of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Brian Jones and Jim Morrison.

The Beatles' decision in August 1966 to stop touring can be interpreted as both cause and effect of many of the changes that were occurring contemporaneously within their careers. Seen as effect, it came about because of a growing dissatisfaction with the conditions of touring and a deep frustration with the constraints that such routines placed upon their musical development; it reflected the group's growing disillusionment with the traditional role of pop star. Harrison was the most disillusioned:

> »We got in a rut, going round the world. It was a different audience each day, but we were doing the same things. There was no satisfaction in it. Nobody could hear. It was just a bloody big row. We got worse as musicians, playing the same old junk every day. There was no satisfaction at all.« (DAVIES 1968: 232).

Seen as cause, the space it created within each of their lives provided the opportunity for them to engage in debates, projects and relationships that could not have been contained beforehand; the four Beatles felt increasingly free to confront the assumption that members of a pop group only had relevance or validity within the boundaries of that group. Ringo Starr took screen-acting roles in *Candy* (1968) and *The Magic Christian* (1969). McCartney wrote the soundtrack for *The Family Way* (1966) and recorded with the Black Dyke Mills Band (1968). Lennon appeared in *How I Won The War* (1966), and his one-act stage play *In His Own Write* was performed at the National Theatre (1968). Harrison composed the soundtrack for

Wonderwall (1968) and produced and recorded with the Radha Krishna Temple (1969). While these, and other, projects were little more than temporary excursions, they are nonetheless important because of the manner in which they demonstrated the fallacy of the belief that group members had nothing to do or say outside the group. In doing so they began to move towards the construction of four recognisably individual identities rather than one corporate identity; at the same time they were developing a behavioural model for other musicians to comprehend and adopt.

The rate at which the group were allowed to utilise the credits they had amassed in order to sanction such diversions from the prevalent expectations of their role did not weaken, but in fact strengthened their status; at this stage in the idiosyncrasy credit model, it is non-conformity that serves to increase the influence of leaders. Thus, »the speed at which the Beatles were not only outdistancing but lapping the public« (SALEWICZ 1986: 189) was in itself a source of new credit accumulation.

The end of touring also coincided with a fundamental shift in the nature of their music. The archetypal pop song has always been — and arguably still is — the love song: either a celebration of genuine and mutual love, a comment about the nature and meaning of love, or a lament for lost or unrequited love. From 1966 onwards the Beatles ceased to follow these conventions as they had before, as an examination of their musical output reveals. Of the twenty-two songs featured on their first eleven singles — from *Love Me Do/P.S. I Love You* (October 1962) to *Day Tripper/We Can Work It Out* (December 1965) — all can be described as love songs. Of the twenty-two songs featured on their last eleven singles — from *Paperback Writer/Rain* (June 1966) to *Let It Be/You Know My Name* (March 1970) — no more than six can be considered in this way. Their album tracks reveal the same distinctions. Of the tracks on their first six albums — from *Please Please Me* (March 1963) to *Rubber Soul* (December 1965) — 91 per cent are love songs. Of the tracks on their last six albums — from *Revolver* (August 1966) to *Let It Be* (May 1970) — only 16 per cent are love songs.

The Beatles incursion into film-making with *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), which was conceived, written, produced and directed by the group, and the opening of their Apple boutique in London in the same year were the precursors to their decision to establish a production and management company (Apple Corps Ltd). The death of Brian Epstein in August 1967 had represented the disappearance of the last tangible constraint on their career. With offices in Savile Row and an initial investment of £800,000, the new company's ambitions were very much broader than those of previous organisations established by performers seeking greater control of their own output, such as Frank Sinatra's Reprise record label. Boasting five separate divisions (electronics, films, publishing, records, retailing) and a declared policy to discover new talent, assist struggling artists and market inventions, Apple failed, and its protracted and unwieldy demise coincided with the eventual dissolution of the group.

If the award of the M.B.E. to the Beatles had represented an idealised ideological relationship between pop star and country, then Lennon's decision to re-

turn the medal in 1969 symbolised its irrevocable fracture. Coupled with the group's claims that they shared a joint in the toilets of Buckingham Palace just before their investiture (COLEMAN 1984: 246), the medal's return and the reasons given for it measured conclusively the space that now lay between the Beatles and the conventional pop stars they had once been:

> Your Majesty: I am returning this M.B.E. in protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam, and against *Cold Turkey* slipping down the charts. With love, John Lennon of Bag. (COLEMAN 1984: 324).

In retrospect, much of the Beatles' significance for the development of popular music centres around their willingness to question and overturn many of the conventional wisdoms within one institution — the entertainment industry — and their subsequent participation in the critical scrutiny of other institutions too. That they were able to this depended on a consensual acknowledgement of their status, which had at first been attained by their conformity to agreed patterns of behaviour and activity. Once this had been achieved, their position was enhanced by actions which departed from existing norms and which established new ones. Such a process is rare — primarily because those in a position to wield influence for change are those who are most rewarded by a maintenance of the status quo; innovation and risk-taking carry with them, by definition, the danger of failure. The Beatles' guarantee against the penalties of failure was provided by their accumulation of idiosyncrasy credits which permitted them, as high-status members of the popular music industry, to deviate from its dominant ideologies without fear of sanctions.

Stardom Within Popular Music: A Typology

At this point, I wish to combine the above observations with insights offered by Klapp (1969) and discussed by Dyer (1982) to propose a model of star types within which the progression of the careers of Elvis Presley and the Beatles can be located. Klapp's contention is that the relationship of a star to the prevalent norms must be recognised as essentially ideological, and can be distinguished in terms of one of three behavioural categorisations — reinforcement, seduction and transcendence.

The category of reinforcement equates directly with demonstrations of conformity which act »to reinforce a person in social roles — encourage him to play those which are highly valued — and to maintain the image of the group« (KLAPP 1969: 219).

Seduction involves rule-breaking or an infringement of the norms, »but in a charming way« (DYER 1982: 27). There is no attempt to create new rules or undermine existing ideologies, and while it might appear to question particular components of a culture, this role confirms the general relevance of its conventions..

Transcendence demands innovation. Traditional assumptions are challenged and replaced, fresh practices are introduced, new philosophies elevated. »This is

more than just getting away with something, as in the previous category, since it does redefine and recreate standards by which experience is to be judged« (DYER 1982: 28).

In addition to this ideological dimension of a star's career, I wish to include a second relevant dimension, which is its duration. Clearly the division between temporary and permanent stardom is much more contentious than the divisions between the ideological categories (although they themselves are not fixed). But however difficult it might be to define the point at which the categories separate, there do undoubtedly exist differences, which are more than merely intuitive recognitions, between transient and enduring celebrity; this dimension might be best comprehended by conceptualising it as a continuum rather than as two distinct categories. In all, therefore, the model is composed of six types.

	Temporary	**Permanent**
Reinforcement	Idol	Perennial
Seduction	Arriviste	Eccentric
Transcendence	Rebel	Innovator

The Idol. An apparently endless supply of young (predominantly male) singers and musicians have formed the nucleus of much of the popular music industry's central figures. Their careers can range from just one hit record to success over months or years. While the precise conventions they are required to reinforce obviously vary over time, their relationship to the industry's dominant ideology remains firm — in terms of sexuality, appearance and professional activities. Donny Osmond, the Bay City Rollers, Bros, Jason Donovan are examples of this category.

The Perennial. At some point it may become evident that the idol's career has evolved into something more lasting, and that his or her celebrity is no longer solely dependent on hit singles or concert appearances. Rod Stewart, Cher and Tom Jones are among those who have made this transition. They continue to reinforce the conventional expectations of what a popular musician is permitted to do. Their success depends not only on the ability to retain an audience, but to recruit new ones.

The Arriviste. Defined by his or her ambition, and a willingness to utilise whatever devices are considered appropriate to the satisfaction of that ambition, the arriviste often presents a charming, surprising or bizarre persona. This serves to distinguish such a performer from the conventional idol, and is valuable in that it encourages a concentration of media attention. In their different ways, Freddie & the Dreamers, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Tiny Tim, Adam Ant, the Beastie Boys made use of this strategy; in contemporary classical music, Nigel Kennedy provides a singular example.

The Eccentric. The ability of the arriviste to elongate his or her career cannot be planned with any certainty, which accounts for their sporadic or transient nature. Such attempts are contingent upon continual sequences of new audiences, ready to be shocked, entertained, seduced. Gary Glitter and Boy George are among the small number of British musicians who constantly strive to re-invent and re-present themselves for consumption by audiences not yet bored with the essentially predictable nature of their activities.

The Rebel. By ostentatiously and dramatically defying conventional expectations, the rebel actively generates controversy and hostility. By posing a threat to the existing order, he or she ensures that those excluded from its ranks or disaffected with its operations are likely to be enticed into a consideration of the new possibilities the rebel espouses, be they constructive or nihilistic. Many of the punk bands in the mid-1970s — notably the Sex Pistols — gave a temporary voice to those audiences and artists to whom the excesses of glam-rock were offensive and irrelevant. Similarly the growth of rap music through the 1980s has provided performers such as Snoop Doggy Dog the appropriate context in which to proclaim their rebellion.

The Innovator. The articulation of radical explanations, the undermining of seemingly secure conventions and the capacity to depart from existing modes of behaviour — successfully and repeatedly — are as rare within popular music as elsewhere. Genuine innovation derives from a unique combination of artistic and political passions. Bob Dylan is perhaps the finest example of an innovator who has remained competent and active within popular music; and although their careers were shorter, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley merit inclusion in this category.

If this model is now imposed on my analyses of the careers of Elvis Presley and the Beatles, then the possibilities for shifts in career trajectory become apparent. In accumulating a large stock of credits, through conforming to the expectations of the popular music industry, the Beatles were, in effect, fulfilling the role of idol; indeed , that is how they were widely perceived in their early career. When, at a later date, they began to utilise that stock of credits to sanction behaviour which did radically depart from normal practice, the Beatles were able to become innovators; and this is how their overall contribution to music has been evaluated. It was, therefore, their competence as, and success in, the role of idols which permitted them to subsequently move into the role of innovators.

By contrast, the history of Elvis Presley is best approached by ideologically referencing the beginnings of his career in the category of transcendence. While the Beatles were idols who became innovators, Presley was the rebel who became the perennial, happy to exchange his gold suit and fleet of pink Cadillacs for seasons at Las Vegas and visits with Richard Nixon. That Presley not only allowed this to happen but seemed to deliberately pursue it, indicates that although there are comparisons in terms of magnitude and duration between his and the Beatles' careers, there are substantial contradictions in terms of their relationships to the prevailing ideologies of popular music, their career trajectories, and the significance of these for the nature of their stardom.

Conclusion

The paths followed by Elvis Presley and the Beatles are not the only available routes, nor even those most frequently undertaken. Indeed, it is probable that the majority of successful popular musicians develop a career trajectory which stays firmly within a particular ideological category. Thus, for example, Cliff Richard has never strayed from the category of reinforcement; over time, he has merely evolved from idol to perennial, always displaying and confirming the conventionally approved modes of behaviour, as his award of a knighthood in 1995 amply demonstrated. The career of Michael Jackson might be best understood by utilising the category of seduction. The undoubted novelty of his appeal as a child performer with the Jackson Five can be seen as a fore-runner to the bizarre and confused nature of Jackson today. But in moving from arriviste to eccentric, he has done little to fundamentally challenge the familiar assumptions of the popular music industry. And Frank Zappa, initially with the Mothers Of Invention, and then as a solo artist, constantly worked within the category of transcendence. He remains the early West Coast rebel who later accomplished much as a genuine musical innovator.

Two factors prompt a comparative analysis of Presley and the Beatles — the extent of their success and the extent of their mutation. Even here, they may not be unique. In his transition from an all-American surfer boy to a reclusive and tormented musical perfectionist, Brian Wilson demonstrates a similar career trajectory to the Beatles. And the opulence and familiarity of the Rolling Stones in the 1990s suggests that the route they have followed from their beginnings as long-haired, anti-Establishment rebels in the 1960s is not dissimilar from that taken by Elvis Presley.

Nevertheless, it is the contrast between the Beatles and Presley that provides the most pertinent comparison; their career trajectories do not simply display varying patterns, but are in contra-distinction to each other. Based on those two examples, my argument has been that attempts to fully comprehend their success must not only take account of the very distinct ideological foundations upon which the different phases of their careers were constructed, but need to place an examination of those foundations at the heart of an analysis which recognises the specific form of stardom, and deviations from it, as inherently ideological.

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Sažetak

IDEOLOGIJA, PUTANJA I SUSTAV ZVIJEZDA: ELVIS PRESLEY I *THE BEATLES*

Mnoge reference o »sustavu zvijezda« i »zvijezdi« u popularnoj glazbi ne uspijevaju prepoznati raznolikost načina na koje se takav položaj može ostvariti. Štoviše, ti se termini često uporabljuju u opisivanju procesa i izvoditelja koji su očito i bitno različiti u pogledu njihove vjernosti konvencionalnim rutinama i prevladavajućim praksama u popularnoj glazbenoj industriji. Ključna perspektiva u svakoj takvoj analizi mora stoga biti široko ideološka. Upotrebljavajući Hollanderovu teoriju » idiosinkretičkih vjerovanja« za objašnjenje karijera Beatlesa i Mellyevo tumačenje »pobune kao stila« za razumijevanje uspjeha Elvisa Presleya postaje mogućim razumjeti putanje karijera dviju najvećih zvijezda popularne glazbe na način koji uključuje ideološko, koncentrirajući se na njihove glazbene i profesionalne djelatnosti. U slučaju Beatlesa njihova se putanja razvija od ranog konformizma do kasnijeg nekonformizma. U Presleyevu slučaju, pak, razvija se od ranog nekonformizma do konačnog konformizma. Nadalje, središnji pojmovi ovih argumentacija upotrebljavaju se potom u konstruiranju tipologije karijera zvijezda, što je relevantno za cijelo složeno područje popularne glazbe.

CHAPTER THREE

SYNERGIES AND RECIPROCITIES:

THE DYNAMICS OF MUSICAL AND PROFESSIONAL

INTERACTION BETWEEN BOB DYLAN AND THE BEATLES

Synergies and Reciprocities: The Dynamics of Musical and Professional Interaction between the Beatles and Bob Dylan

Ian Inglis

Introduction

Confronting—and comprehending—developments in the history of popular music demands an elusive combination of industry and insight. The need for industry is necessitated by the undeniable depth of musical activity and the complexity of the circumstances surrounding its production and consumption. Far from being a relatively peripheral leisure and entertainment option, popular music has been described as a "form of communication and a sphere of culture that routinely diffuses and amplifies its influence deeply and sensuously into the lives of those who create it, listen to it, use it, dance to it" (Lull 30).

The requirement for insight stems from the subjective, not to say idiosyncratic, appeals that particular musical forms have for their audiences and the ways in which those audiences utilize such forms—factors that can only properly be considered through the suspension of value judgments about their cultural or artistic significance. This point is neatly made by Brian Longhurst: "I am suspicious of accounts which write off whole forms of music because they do not seem to conform to traditional standards of high art or because they have mass appeal. Who is to say that children's enjoyment of Kylie Minogue or Take That *necessarily* has pernicious effects?" (251).

Without the application of industry and the possession of insight as outlined above, there is a danger that much writing about popular music's history will become—if it has not done so already—fragmented and partisan, signifying little more than the announcement of the author's allegiance to particular artists, styles, and periods. Moreover, these problems may be compounded by a tendency to reinvent (deliber-

ately or unwittingly) accounts of the past that place greater or lesser emphasis on their importance and achievements. Perhaps this is inevitable. C. Wright Mills has written of the social sciences generally that "the master task of the historian is to keep the human record straight, but that is indeed a deceptively simple statement of aim" (161). Obstacles to this task include the unreliability of memory, the discovery of new documentary evidence, changes in emphasis and intention, and decisions over selection and interpretation.

But Mills is adamant that these need not be insuperable obstacles to the achievement of historical understanding: "Social science deals with problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within social structures . . . [T]hese three—biography, history, society—are the co-ordinate parts of the proper study of man" (159). Placed within the context of popular music, the issue that these considerations lead to can be stated in a very precise way: "It is about how we should understand what we already think we know" (Bradley 3).

Simon Frith has provided a useful distinction between the ways in which the history of popular music can be written. First, as progress: "[P]ast sounds unfolding in logical order to the present" (4); new acts replace old ones, performers develop and improve their skills with each record, audiences become more knowledgeable. Secondly, as cycle: "[T]he rise and fall of stars . . . the endless emergence of new trends from the musical margins" (5); to the extent that styles are repeated, patterns are observed, parallels sought and recognized, contemporary popular music recalls and recycles the past. Thirdly, as hidden: "[T]racing the unexpected connections . . . to point out what no one else realised" (6); like a reporter closing in on a scoop or a detective reconstructing the case, the researcher is involved in a search for clues until the truth is eventually revealed.

If there is to be a way that allows the history of popular music to be adequately written and understood, it must incorporate all of these approaches. This applies equally whether the subject is the history of rock and roll itself (Gillett), the development of a particular genre, such as the blues (Oliver), or the biography of an individual performer (Guralnick). In what follows I hope to narrow down the area under investigation even more to concentrate on the specifics of musical and professional interactions, often intermittent, between two of popular music's most celebrated and influential performers—the Beatles and Bob Dylan.

In doing so, I shall attempt to combine the discourses identified by Frith—progress, cycle, and hidden—which define its literature. In addition, I hope to emphasize the intersections of biography, history, and society, discussed by C. Wright Mills. To facilitate such an investigation I will employ two concepts whose genesis lies outside accounts of popular music: *synergy* from business studies, and *reciprocity* from anthropology. They are not at all intended to stand as prescriptions for future research; rather they are heuristic devices that may allow a point of entry into a little recorded yet highly important segment of the recent history of popular music.

Synergy

> Synergism goes beyond co-operative effort. Synergistic co-operation brings a wider law into operation, in that the total effect of things acting together is greater than the sum of individual or separate effects achieved.
>
> —Yoneji Masuda (5)

In his account of the encroaching information age, Masuda's analysis of the framework of future societies repeatedly emphasizes the inspirations to be drawn from a spirit of synergy and mutual assistance. However, synergy involves and implies much more than mere teamwork or voluntary sacrifice. It centers around the proposition that individuals, acting from their own standpoint, will, in combination, create a synthesis of energies to achieve a common goal that would otherwise remain unattainable.

Several factors in the formulation of this belief give it a precision that prevents its contents from being reduced merely to the observation that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The first such factor is the existence of a common goal, mutually recognized via common needs, that does not conflict with the goals of individuals. This means that there are no calls for sacrifice. Individual concerns are not abandoned or surrendered in favor of a group objective; they are one and the same. Secondly, individual action is voluntary; there must be no coercion, or disapprobation if action is not volunteered or is unsuccessful. The third characteristic is that individuals and groups will cooperate actively in pursuit of their goal; the methods and the organization will be

dynamic, not static. The fourth factor is self-control; individuals and groups specify, monitor and control their own actions as they move toward the common goal. With these conditions "individuals and groups will build an order of social action among themselves in order to attain their goal by working together synergistically" (Masuda 119).

Reciprocity

> [T]hose "vice versa" movements between two parties known familiarly as "reciprocity."
>
> —Marshall Sahlins (188)

Sahlins's concentration on the concept of reciprocity as the major form of transaction in primitive society derives from Polanyi's distinction between patterns of reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange as forms of economic integration. According to this classification, redistribution implies an allocative central point into and out of which there are movements; exchange requires acts of barter within a system of price-making markets; reciprocity occurs between and within symmetrically arranged groupings. Polanyi stresses the importance of "the factual connection between reciprocative behaviour on the interpersonal level, on the one hand, and given symmetrical groupings, on the other" (Polanyi 124).

Sahlins appends to these themes the observation that reciprocity is not "an unconditional one-for-one exchange" (190) but "a whole class of exchanges, a continuum of forms" (191). In addition, he asserts that in recognizing that variety, we may "glimpse the interplay between reciprocity, social relations, and material circumstances" (190), thus shifting the significance of such transactions beyond the strictly economic. These two contributions will be seen to be especially significant in their application to popular music.

On the continuum of forms that defines acts of reciprocity, Sahlins locates three points. They are not independent categories, but positions at which differences can be recognized.

Generalized *Balanced* *Negative*

Generalized reciprocity, at the solidary extreme of the continuum, refers to acts of genuine altruism, assistance or gifts freely given, with no obligation of return. "Failure to reciprocate does not cause the giver of stuff to stop giving" (194). The breastfeeding of babies or being a blood donor are examples of such behavior. Balanced reciprocity is the midpoint; perfectly balanced reciprocity, involving the simultaneous exchange of the same type of goods or services to the same value, is unlikely. In practice, the concept "may be more loosely applied to transactions which stipulate returns of commensurate worth or utility within a given period" (194-95). There is thus an expectation that at some point there will be an exchange of equivalents; a birthday gift or an invitation to dinner carry with them the assumption that the act is at least likely to be returned, in like or similar form. Negative reciprocity, the unsociable extreme, is necessarily exploitative. "[I]t is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity . . . the participants confront each other as opposed interests, each looking to maximise utility at the other's expense" (195). Deceit, trickery, even violence, can accompany such transactions.

Masuda's vision of the sophisticated and technologically reliant management structure of the future, and Sahlins's account of economic anthropology in primitive societies are, to say the least, unlikely points from which to launch an investigation of 20th-century popular music. Nevertheless, an analysis of the musical cooperation and professional interaction that characterizes the relationship between Bob Dylan and the Beatles does benefit substantially from the incorporation of these approaches. By drawing on the concept of reciprocity to illuminate the routine, substantive examples of cooperation between the two sets of performers, and that of synergy to examine their conscious involvement in working toward a set of shared musical objectives, I hope to demonstrate that histories of popular music can be presented in a manner that adequately bridges the gulf between anecdotal journalism and often unduly laborious musicology, of which many familiar examples of both abound.

The Beatles and Bob Dylan

> Brian Epstein: These boys are going to explode. I am completely confident that one day they will be bigger than Elvis Presley.
>
> —Epstein (51)

> Bob Dylan: John Hammond, he's the big producer, you know. Well, hey, he says I'm gonna be bigger than Presley. Bigger than *Presley!*
>
> —Dylan qtd. in Scaduto (108)

Born within thirty months of each other in the early 1940s, and growing up in the culturally devalued industrial environments of Duluth and Liverpool, it seems unsurprising that, as teenagers, both Dylan and the four members of the Beatles should independently be drawn to and immersed in what Guralnick has described as the "music that expressed a kind of pure joyousness, a sense of soaring release that . . . seems unlikely ever to be recaptured" (qtd. in DeCurtis and Henke 24).

Rock and roll in the 1950s produced many memorable performers, but in first and second hand accounts of the formative musical years and subsequent careers of the Beatles and Bob Dylan, three recurring models are cited. The first of these, not unexpectedly, is Elvis Presley:

Paul McCartney: "Every time I felt low, I just put on an Elvis, and I'd feel great, beautiful. I'd no idea how records were made and it was just magic. Oh, it was beautiful!" (qtd. Davies 39-40).

Farida McFree: "I was with Bob Dylan the night Presley died. He really took it very bad. He was really grieving. He said that if it wasn't for him, he would never have gotten started. That he opened the door" (qtd. in Heylin 298).

The second major common influence was Little Richard: John Lennon: "The new record was 'Long Tall Sally.' When I heard it, it was so great I couldn't speak. You know how you are torn. I didn't want to leave Elvis. . . . I didn't want to say anything against Elvis, even in my mind" (qtd. in Goldman 66). And Bob Dylan listed his ambition in his 1959 high-school yearbook: "To join the band of Little Richard" (qtd. in Shelton 39).

And Buddy Holly was the third source of inspiration: "Stylistically, no pop act came near Buddy Holly in John and Paul's affection at that time" (Coleman, *John Lennon* 95). "A new and lasting musical model emerged—Buddy Holly. Bob began to imitate Holly's sweet, naive, almost childlike voice. The vocal quality of many Dylan recordings shows his debt to Holly" (Shelton 53).

There was one more historical antecedent common to both. Bob Dylan's debt to and admiration for Woody Guthrie is obvious, substan-

tial, and well-documented. "Woody Guthrie was the archetypal American troubadour . . . a giant humanist, a heroic American culture figure, a major poet, still largely undiscovered, and a singer and composer of some of our greatest songs. . . . Woody was Dylan's first Tambourine Man. Guthrie provided a way of looking at the world" (Shelton 76).

In the early 1960s, Dylan was a regular performer of Guthrie's songs (including "Pastures of Plenty," "Car Car," "Jesus Christ," and "Hard Travelin'"), defined him as his first major musical idol, visited him in hospital in New Jersey, and adopted him as a source of spiritual guidance. Three decades later, it was especially significant that the song with which he chose to open his appearance at the Madison Square Garden 30th Anniversary Concert in October 1992 should be "Song to Woody" from his first LP *Bob Dylan* (March 1962). Michael Gray has asserted that the critical influences handed on to Dylan by Guthrie were subject matter, humor, idealism, and "the seminal need of the artist to stand alone, true to his individual vision" (15).

In Britain in the 1950s, while the name of Woody Guthrie was relatively unknown, his songs (and those, too, of Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter) were interpreted and popularized by Lonnie Donegan, a former singer with the Chris Barber Jazz Band, who became the leading figure of skiffle music and arguably the country's first genuine pop star. He was also one of the very few British performers to enjoy success in the United States; "Rock Island Line" reached No. 8 in the *Billboard* singles charts of April 1956, eight years before the Beatles themselves led the "British Invasion" of 1964. "Donegan's influence on British popular music has been incalculable. He had a basic three-chord style, easy to copy, and the line-up of his group inspired hundreds of thousands of young people to make do-it-yourself music. Here was self-made rock 'n' roll" (Coleman, *John Lennon* 50).

The four Beatles were among the hundreds of thousands inspired in just that way; indeed the group Paul McCartney was invited to join by John Lennon in July 1957 was the Quarry Men Skiffle Group, boasting the standard skiffle line-up of guitar, banjo, washboard, tea-chest bass, and drums, and whose selection of songs included "Rock Island Line," "Cumberland Gap," "Freight Train," and "Last Train to San Fernando." Although Donegan drew on his own jazz experiences and a musical knowledge derived from the classical world (his father was a violinist in the Scottish National Orchestra) to create a distinctly British variation of

the American folk tradition, it was a style that contained some startling indications of future musical directions. "He was nasal-voiced, played guitar and banjo, but mesmerized a nation" (Coleman, *John Lennon* 50) is a description not of Bob Dylan in the early 1960s but of Lonnie Donegan in the mid-1950s.

By 1964, the Beatles and Bob Dylan were in comparable positions. Both had spent the years since the start of the decade constructing solid local reputations, in Liverpool and New York respectively. Both had, in the previous twelve months, gained national celebrity in their own country, yet both remained relatively unknown internationally. In Britain, the release of "She Loves You" in August 1963, followed by a hugely successful appearance at the Royal Variety Show in November 1963, had led to the emergence of the phenomenon known as Beatlemania. In the United States, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* was released in May 1963; it included "Blowin' in the Wind," soon to be adopted as the anthem of the Civil Rights movement, and which provided a hit record for Peter, Paul and Mary (in July 1963, their cover version reached No. 2 in the *Billboard* charts). Also in July, Dylan made his first appearance at the Newport Folk Festival; in August, he participated in the Civil Rights march on Washington, led by Martin Luther King; and in December, he received the Tom Paine Award of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee.

At this period, their audiences were "at opposite ends of the spectrum, Dylan with aging Beatniks into peace and poetry, and the Beatles with teenyboppers into penpals and posters" (Williams 45). But January 1964 saw the appearance of two records whose impacts and influences would, in their different ways, eventually create the synergy that was to lead to a blurring of audience distinctions, the refinement of old and the emergence of new musical styles, unprecedented demonstrations of artistic co-operation, and nothing less than a redefinition of the structures and cultures of popular music. *The Times They Are A-Changin'* enabled Bob Dylan to become a pop star; "I Want to Hold Your Hand" introduced the Beatles to the United States, and subsequently, to the rest of the world.

Still without a hit single or LP, Dylan's concert at the Royal Festival Hall, London, in May 1964 sold out quickly and comfortably. The review in *The Times* compared his "sheer personal magnetism" with that of Callas, Segovia, and Count Basie (Shelton 255). Following the performance, there were events that while certainly not comparable with the

Beatlemania raging on both sides of the Atlantic, suggested that his audience was expanding to encompass more than the archetypal purists with whom folk music had long been associated in Britain. Anthea Joseph, who accompanied Dylan on parts of his British visit, has recalled: "We were walking out of the stage door . . . and Bob disappeared under this wave of humanity who were sort of grabbing at his clothes and his hair. He was terrified! It wasn't something you expected. I mean, that happened to pop stars. You knew it happened to pop stars—but not singer-songwriters" (Heylin 95).[1]

While major chart success would continue to elude him for a further twelve months, the fans' response in London was significant in that it anticipated, tentatively and briefly, the sentiments and allegiances that would soon become permanently associated with the performer. Two months later, in July 1964, Dylan's appearance at the Newport Folk Festival indicated, again in a quiet and unrecognized manner, forthcoming musical changes. It was here that he gave the first public performance of "Mr. Tambourine Man," one of the tracks which would later appear on *Bringing It All Back Home* (March 1965), the LP that definitively and controversially marked his transition from acoustic folk to electric rock music.

For the Beatles, the first six months of 1964 were to be the period in which the long-standing belief of manager Brian Epstein that the group would eclipse Elvis Presley was to be realized. Following their initial appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in February 1964, which was watched by an audience of seventy million or 60 percent of all American television viewers, they held the top five positions in the *Billboard* singles chart of March 31, 1964, plus an additional seven entries lower in the Top 100. Beatlemania quickly spread around the world. In June, more than 100,000 people thronged the streets of Amsterdam to see them. In Australia, where they had in March held the top six positions in the singles charts, with a total of ten in the Top 20, 300,000 fans surrounded their hotel in Adelaide, 250,000 in Melbourne. Recalling the group's U.S. tour of August 1964, their U.S. agent, Norman Weiss concluded: "The Beatles and Elvis are both in show business. After that, any comparison is just a joke. No one, before or since, has had the crowds the Beatles had" (Davies 221).

When Dylan and the Beatles met for the first time, in August 1964, at the group's New York hotel, they met, if not as equals, certainly as

equivalents. Both were essentially singer-songwriters, yet whose early live performances and recording profiles had presented them, to a degree, as singers of others' songs. *Bob Dylan* (March 1962) featured two original compositions among its thirteen tracks; *Please Please Me* (March 1963) included eight original compositions in its fourteen tracks. But subsequent releases quickly abandoned this convention; all eleven tracks on Dylan's third LP, *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (August 1964) were self-compositions, as were all thirteen tracks on the Beatles' third LP, *A Hard Day's Night* (August 1964). This facet of their musical activity was more than merely fortuitous. "Then unique in being prolific enough to fill complete LPs with their own material, Dylan and the Beatles were bound eventually to collide and react to each other" (MacDonald 98).

Both had been repeatedly cited as spokesmen for their generation, whose music was seen to be representative of wider social and political concerns. Such affirmations came from other performers, like Peter, Paul and Mary: "Bob Dylan is the most important songwriter in the country today. He has his finger on the pulse of American youth" (Shelton 164); and Joan Baez: "Bob Dylan's songs are powerful as poetry and as music. . . . Bob is expressing what all these kids want to say" (Shelton 181). They also came from a fascinated, and sometimes confused, news media. The populist *Daily Mirror* stated: "Fact is that Beatle people are everywhere. From Wapping to Windsor. Aged seven to seventy. And it's plain to see why these four cheeky, energetic lads from Liverpool go down so big. They're young, new. They're high-spirited, cheerful" (Norman 192); whereas the communist *Daily Worker* believed that "The Mersey sound is the voice of 80,000 crumbling houses and 30,000 people on the dole" (Davies 201).

Both, in addition to enjoying popular acclaim, were to become accustomed to seeing their compositions subjected to increasingly serious academic scrutiny of a kind unfamiliar within popular music. In December 1963, William Mann, the music critic of *The Times*, had, in his wholly favorable review of *With the Beatles*, commented: "One gets the impression that they think simultaneously of harmony and melody, so firmly are the major tonic sevenths and ninths built into their tunes, and the flat-submediant key-switches, so natural is the Aeolian cadence at the end of 'Not a Second Time'" (Dowlding 57).[2] The *Guardian*'s assessment of Dylan's songs in 1965 referred to the way in which his

"loose framework of assonant and consonant rhyme, using shifting eight to twelve syllable iambic rhythms, which adjust themselves as naturally to speech as to song put him in a league with the youthfully committed Pound, Auden and MacNeice" (Shelton 22).

Both were admirers of the other's music. By the time of the first meeting, arranged by journalist Al Aronowitz, "Harrison and Lennon, especially, were self-confessed fanatics, and listened to his albums almost with reverence" (Giuliano 54). Dylan, for his part, was unequivocal in his praise for the Beatles: "I knew they were pointing the direction where music had to go. In my head the Beatles were *it*" (DeCurtis and Henke 212).

Much emphasis has been imposed by commentators on the Beatles' introduction, by Dylan, to marijuana at their meeting. While some accounts may be inflated by hyperbole—"a small but auspicious event occurred . . . that would grow to affect the consciousness of the world" (Brown and Gaines 134)—there is little doubt that the combination of the wearying effects of a lengthy and arduous U.S. tour, their abrupt transition from consumers of alcohol to consumers of cannabis, and their recognition of Bob Dylan as a lyricist and composer whose achievements seemed to rival their own, decisively shaped their future musical output and personal ambitions. Derek Taylor, the Beatles' press officer, who was present at that meeting, has commented that "a friendship instigated and pursued through mutually admired recordings was made flesh through marijuana and the shared exploration of deepest inner space" (Taylor 92). The impact appears to have been acknowledged equally by the individual group members. "It was Paul . . . who was the most profoundly affected . . . he was thinking, he declared, *really* thinking for the very first time . . . he would never be the same again" (Salewicz 170). "To George Harrison, Dylan was a revelation. Never in his short life had he met anyone so persuasively hip" (Giuliano 54). "McCartney and especially Harrison also became admirers of Dylan at this time, but it was Lennon whose work was most obviously affected" (Hertsgaard 127).

In fact it was John Lennon's efforts to emulate him that show the first and most obvious signs of Dylan's influence. Analysts of Beatles' songs including MacDonald and Hertsgaard have cited "I'm a Loser" from *Beatles for Sale* (December 1964) as the group's first song whose introspective and despondent lyrics presaged a move away from the

essentially simplistic conventions of the standard pop song toward the honest self-scrutiny and melancholy to be found in many of Dylan's songs about relationships, including "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right," "Boots of Spanish Leather," and "One Too Many Mornings." From that point on in the career of the Beatles, the significance of Bob Dylan was rarely absent and increasingly apparent: "Nascent signs of Dylan's influence had been evident on the previous *Beatles for Sale*, but on *Help!* those first tentative efforts have developed into fully realized musical achievements" (Hertsgaard 127).

In addition to the title track itself, "It's Only Love," McCartney's "I've Just Seen a Face" and, definitively, "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" demonstrated a clear resolution to continue along this path. Lennon himself has admitted of the latter song, which was one of the very few Beatle tracks of the period on which he, as lead vocalist, was not double-tracked: "That's me in my Dylan period again. I am like a chameleon, influenced by whatever is going on. If Elvis can do it, I can do it. If the Everly Brothers can do it, me and Paul can. Same with Dylan" (Sheff and Golson 165).

And while relatively few critics have commented on the composition and performance of "Yesterday" in this context, choosing instead to report on the song's achievements after its inclusion on *Help!* (having attracted more than 2,500 cover versions, it is now, by far, popular music's most recorded song), it is interesting to recall *Billboard*'s original review: "Paul goes it alone on a Dylan-styled piece of material" (Coleman, *McCartney* 59). In a similar observation, Justin Hayward, of the Moody Blues, has asserted: "The moment I heard it, I knew it was a classic . . . [T]here was some influence, particularly in the opening, of Bob Dylan; there's an inversion that Paul uses on the open chord that reminds me of "The Times They Are A-Changin" (Coleman, *McCartney* 71).

The recording sessions for *Help!*, released in August 1965, commenced in February of that year. Only a month before, in January, Bob Dylan had started recording sessions for his next LP, to be released in March, and which would just as emphatically confirm the way in which his musical trajectory had been disrupted and reoriented by the Beatles, and the by now rampant "British Invasion" of the United States. "The title *Bringing It All Back Home* hinted in part at a wresting of musical initiative from British performers at that time spearheading a revival of blues-based rock" (Day 150).

Specifically, *Bringing It All Back Home* marked Dylan's adoption of electric instrumentation (on the LP's first side) in his attempt to attain the sheer energy of the Beatles' recordings. Although the second side was largely free of any additional instrumentation, its inherent rationale was corroborated by several subsequent and related events. The first was the release in May of "Subterranean Homesick Blues," the LP's opening track, which became Dylan's first hit single in the United States, reaching No. 39 in the *Billboard* chart. The second, described as "a turning point . . . which changed him from a folk star into an international pop superstar" (Shelton 288) was his eight-date sellout tour of Britain in May and June. The early exuberance shown by the audiences a year earlier had by now developed into a form of Dylanmania, which continued throughout the summer. By the autumn, Dylan had achieved five entries in the Top Ten album charts, five entries in the Top 30 singles charts, and had seen major chart successes for cover versions of his compositions by Joan Baez ("It's All Over Now, Baby Blue"), the Byrds ("Mr. Tambourine Man" and "All I Really Want to Do"), Johnny Cash ("It Ain't Me, Babe"), Cher ("All I Really Want to Do"), and Manfred Mann ("If You Gotta Go, Go Now"). As early as January of that year, the Beatles (along with the Animals[3] whose rock version of "House of the Rising Sun" had topped the singles charts in both Britain and the United States) had frequently drawn attention to Bob Dylan in their various media interviews. The effect of their advocacy proved to be far-reaching: "If a single external factor triggered Dylan's British breakthrough, it was the Beatles' public endorsement" (Shelton 288). Thirdly, in June, "Like a Rolling Stone" (featuring an array of musicians including Al Kooper on organ and Mike Bloomfield on lead guitar) was released. Six minutes long, it reached No. 2 in the United States and No. 3 in Britain; Dylan himself has testified to the song's importance: "If you're talking about what the breakthrough was for me, I would have to say "Like a Rolling Stone" (Heylin 127). The fourth, and in many ways the most conclusive, event was possibly "the most written-about performance in the history of rock 'n' roll" (Heylin 133). His appearance at that year's Newport Folk Festival in July, backed by members of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and the furious response it evoked from the organizers, fellow performers, and many of the audience, signaled, symbolically and substantively, an irrevocable fracture to, and initiated a major reassembly of, American popular music. Aidan Day has reported on the observation offered by

Geoffrey Stokes: "In a burst of innovation an entire new genre of white pop was created by a merger of the folkies' outsider intellectualism with the newly revivified energies of rock . . . [O]nce Dylan's folkie audience started to merge with the Beatles', it started asking 'Why can't *they* do it? Are they (dread word) superficial?'" (153).

The principal strand of the new genre, which merits the closest scrutiny in this context and presents an especially apposite way in which to assess the consequences of the musical synthesis facilitated by Dylan and the Beatles, is one that was picked up and developed on the West Coast of the United States. The assertion that "the birth of folk-rock has been attributed by some to the Byrds and their cover of "Mr Tambourine Man" (Heylin 128) is supported by Roger McGuinn, who, after duplicating George Harrison's choice of a twelve-string Rickenbacker electric guitar (as seen in the group's movie *A Hard Day's Night*), freely admits "I saw this gap, with Dylan and the Beatles leaning toward each other in concept. That's where we aimed" (Shelton 308). The two individual components of the developing folk-rock—Dylan's lyrics and the Beatles' music—together created a new musical form. It led to the relocation of the center of creative musical activity from England to California; it laid the foundations for the emergence of psychedelic rock in 1967; it alerted both the Beatles and Bob Dylan to engage in a critical and active dialogue with others concerning the musical refinement and reinvention of their own work; and it continues to inform and instruct many recent and contemporary developments in Britain and the United States.

What the Byrds pulled off in 1965 with the landmark "Mr. Tambourine Man" was a resonant synthesis of the Beatles' charged pro forma precision and Dylan's mythopoeic incantations. It turned out to be a startlingly perfect fit, inspiring much that has followed, from their mentors' subsequent *Rubber Soul* and *Blonde on Blonde* to the work of such disparate inheritors as Tom Petty, R.E.M., U2, and Crowded House. (DeCurtis and Henke 309)

Of all the Beatles' LPs, it is *Rubber Soul* (December 1965) that provides the most unequivocal example of the manner in which their mid-1960s musical output derived from their contact with Bob Dylan. On individual tracks—Harrison's "If I Needed Someone," McCartney's "I'm Looking Through You," Lennon's "Girl" and "Norwegian Wood" —in both lyrical and/or melodic form, clear parallels are apparent. But

more than that, the whole LP demonstrates their realization "from Dylan's example, that they didn't have to separate their professional work from their inner lives" (MacDonald 145). Likewise, Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* (May 1966)—rock music's first double album—betrays its reciprocal influences on tracks that include "I Want You," "Just Like a Woman," and "Fourth Time Around," his parody of "Norwegian Wood," which, according to Gray, "outshine(s) its victim . . . it has more subtlety and greater range" (193). While one might even point to the composition of the album cover itself as echoing *Rubber Soul*'s in terms of the dominant colors, background and stance, it is the "funky, bluesy, rock expressionism" (Shelton 321) of the LP as a whole that best illuminates the consequences of his liaison with the Beatles and their contemporaries, and which irrefutably defined his new status: "Bob Dylan—superstar. . . . Only the Beatles and the Stones could generate more excitement. . . . [I]n just a matter of months, he had become the most exciting pop force in the English-speaking world" (Scaduto 222).

That the creative musical output of Dylan and the Beatles was at a prolific peak through 1965 and 1966 is indisputable. A period of a little more than eighteen months was punctuated by LPs like *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Help!*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, *Rubber Soul*, *Blonde On Blonde*, and *Revolver;* and by singles such as "Ticket to Ride," "Like a Rolling Stone," "Day Tripper," "Paperback Writer," "Positively Fourth Street," and "Eleanor Rigby." Each new recording in turn seemed to absorb what had preceded it, stimulate what followed, and help to fashion an environment in which music was not separate from, but integral to, a critical reassessment of the conditions and constraints experienced by the young across the United States and Europe. Nowhere was this more convincingly demonstrated than in the burgeoning counterculture of the time around San Francisco.

> In the years 1965-67 it had all come together astonishingly coherently. There were clear catalysts whose hold on spiritual values kept the thing on track. Dylan was one, his music threading through Kesey's trees at La Honda; the Beatles, who had inspired many of the San Francisco musicians to form bands and dress up,were another. (Taylor 110)

At the same time, the Beatles were redefining their group function; very few of their compositions were by now authentic Lennon-McCart-

ney collaborations. Typically, a song would be written by, and lead vocals performed by, one or other of the group; "Yesterday" and "Eleanor Rigby," on which McCartney dispensed with the group's instrumentation in favor of string accompaniments are merely the most familiar examples of this trend. By contrast, Bob Dylan was seeking the security and companionship to be drawn from a group. In the summer of 1965, in an act that *Time* described as "the most decisive moment in rock history" (Shelton 315), he enlisted the support of the Canadian group, the Hawks; renamed the Band, they joined Dylan on his world tour of 1965-66, the start of a long association in which they quickly proved to be much more than a backing group, contributing hugely to the content and form of his subsequent music.

With the notable exception of Elvis Presley, who had abandoned live performances after his release from the U.S. Army—from March 1960 until August 1969, when he appeared at the International Hotel Show Room in Las Vegas, he participated in two live performances but made 27 movies—a commitment to regular and extensive touring was almost obligatory in the early and mid 1960s. In addition to being profitable in its own right, it was perceived as a useful way in which to advertise new recordings and thus to encourage sales; it was recognized as an appropriate manner in which to maintain contact with and loyalty from audiences; and it could be used to establish a reputation (for musical ability or exciting shows) that relied on alternative skills than those required in the recording studio.

The Beatles and Bob Dylan had long been party to this convention, from schoolboy performances in Liverpool and Hibbing onward. In 1966 there was no reason to suppose that this would change; indeed, to withdraw from touring would have been considered ill-advised in the extreme. But Dylan's motorcycle accident in July of that year near his home at Woodstock[4] led to a cessation of any more live performances (apart from a fifteen-minute appearance at the Woody Guthrie Memorial Show in January 1968 at Carnegie Hall, and a television appearance on *The Johnny Cash Show* in May 1969) for the next three years; his eventual return to the stage was with the Band at the Isle of Wight Festival in August 1969. And just one month after Dylan's enforced retirement, the Beatles played the last concert of their career at San Francisco's Candlestick Park. Unlike Dylan's, theirs was an entirely voluntary and, in fact, much postponed decision.

The fact that the live careers of popular music's two most celebrated, imitated, and creative performers should apparently come to an end within a few weeks of each other was instrumental in persuading the industry to rethink the relationship between itself, the artist, and the audience. Significantly, one of the first responses by EMI and CBS was the hasty release of compilation albums—*A Collection of Beatles Oldies* (December 1966) and *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits* (March 1967)—in an attempt to maintain a merchandising presence.

When new material from the Beatles and Dylan was eventually released, it was immediately apparent that the intervening hiatus had channeled them in contradictory directions. *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (June 1967) has been described by its producer as "a musical fragmentation grenade, exploding with a force that is still being felt. . . . [A]s well as changing the way pop music was viewed, it changed the entire nature of the recording game—for keeps" (Martin, *Summer* 1). The technical complexity, the abundant studio virtuosity, the outrageous ambition of that LP could not have contrasted more strongly with the "sense of musical, physical, spiritual and religious calm" (Shelton 389) that characterized Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* (January 1968). Even though the Beatles had acknowledged him by including him on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, Dylan himself was unmoved by its contents: "The Beatles had just released *Sgt. Pepper* which I didn't like at all. . . . I thought it was a very indulgent album. . . . I didn't think all that production was necessary" (Heylin 184). Their next LPs, too, were equally divergent in their musical range and artistic scope. While the thirty tracks on *The Beatles* (November 1968) ostentatiously demonstrated the individual Beatles' ability to engage in pop, rock and roll, blues, soul, *Nashville Skyline* (April 1969) extended the pattern seen on *John Wesley Harding* in its selection of gentle and melodic country tunes.

In retrospect it is plausible to suggest that these two sets of LPs established separate templates for much musical activity through the 1970s. *Sgt. Pepper* and *The Beatles*—seen by Ian MacDonald as a "masterpiece of programming" (261)—presaged a concentration on meticulous and painstaking studio-concocted music, sometimes incapable of live performance, which typified the output of performers like Yes, Mike Oldfield, Genesis, Pink Floyd, and the Moody Blues, and which led to a wave of what are often misleadingly called "concept albums." *John Wesley Harding* and *Nashville Skyline* pointed toward a simple, clean,

performance-based music known as country-rock, to be expanded and exploited by Poco, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Linda Ronstadt, Kris Kristofferson, Emmylou Harris, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and—ultimately and definitively—the Eagles.

By this point, the synergy that had resulted from the convergence of Dylan's and the Beatles' musical activities had ended. The Beatles had acrimoniously disbanded in April 1970 and would spend much of the next few years in the courts. With the exception of *New Morning* (October 1970), Dylan's recordings during these same years were to be poorly received; in its review of *Self Portrait* (June 1970), *Rolling Stone* posed the question "What is this shit?" (Day 159), while *The Guardian* referred to *Dylan* (November 1973) as "the most embarrassing piece of plastic ever released in the name of a great artist" (Day 160). Not until his and the Band's U.S. tour in January/February 1974 (their first for eight years) and the release of *Blood on the Tracks* (January 1975) would his work evoke the positive critical response of the previous decade. But while the direct, creative fusion of the mid 1960s might have disappeared, Dylan and the Beatles did mutually continue to exchange, to contribute, to reciprocate.

George Harrison is the Beatle whose contact and involvement with Bob Dylan is most readily recorded. Their first of many active musical collaborations was the joint composition in November 1968 of "I'd Have You Anytime," subsequently to appear on Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* (December 1970) along with his version of Dylan's "If Not for You." Also included on the same LP was Harrison's own "Behind that Locked Door," composed, he has since revealed, "when Bob Dylan was playing at the Isle of Wight soon after his *Nashville Skyline* album. I wrote this song about him. It was a good excuse to do a country tune with pedal steel guitar" (Harrison 206). And another joint composition, the unreleased "Every Time Somebody Comes to Town" was also recorded around this time. In August 1971, when he staged the Concert for Bangladesh at Madison Square Garden, Harrison persuaded Dylan to leave his temporary self-imposed seclusion and return to the stage; performing with Harrison, Ringo Starr, and Leon Russell, he sang several of his older songs, including "Just Like a Woman" and "Mr. Tambourine Man." In January 1988, when the Beatles were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at a ceremony in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan, Dylan was one of several musicians who enthusiastically

joined Harrison and Ringo Starr on stage to perform "I Saw Her Standing There." *The Travelling Wilburys Volume 1* (1988) and *Volume 3* (1990) reunited Dylan and Harrison in the studio with Roy Orbison, Jeff Lynne, and Tom Petty in a joint writing and recording venture. On Dylan's *Under the Red Sky* (September 1990), Harrison played lead guitar on the title track. And at Dylan's 30th Anniversary Concert in October 1992 at Madison Square Garden, Harrison performed "Absolutely Sweet Marie," introduced Bob Dylan, and joined him (and others) for a version of "My Back Pages." Harrison himself is adamant in his continuing regard for Dylan, as he freely admits: "Bob was always the gaffer as far as I was concerned. With all due respect to John, I don't think there's anyone in the business who's ever even come close" (Giuliano 55).

Ringo Starr, too, has maintained frequent musical links with Dylan. During the wave of interest in country music stimulated by *Nashville Skyline*, he traveled to Nashville to record his own country album *Beaucoups of Blues* (September 1970), guided and produced by Pete Drake, who had contributed to both *Nashville Skyline* and *John Wesley Harding*. In January 1976, he was one of the guests (along with Stevie Wonder, Isaac Hayes, Stephen Stills and others), when Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue performed at Houston Astrodome in a benefit concert for Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. In the same year, he recorded Dylan's composition "I Didn't Want to Do It" intended for inclusion on *Rotogravure* (September 1976), but later dropped from the LP. And on Thanksgiving Day 1976, he joined Dylan, Van Morrison, Neil Young, Muddy Waters and others on stage at San Francisco's Winterland Palace, to perform with, and celebrate the music of, the Band at The Last Waltz concert. When Dylan recorded *Shot of Love* (August 1981), Ringo Starr was among the musicians he invited to play on the track "Heart of Mine." And they appeared together on stage again in Monaco during Dylan's 1989 World Tour.

Paul McCartney is the Beatle who has preserved the greatest professional distance from Bob Dylan, preferring largely to collaborate with artists of undoubted, but subordinate, talents (Denny Laine, Eric Stewart, Elvis Costello), or to engage in astutely choreographed but essentially ephemeral studio projects with other star performers (Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson). By insisting on complete control at all times, not just over the creative process, but the administrative, organizational and

logistical aspects of his professional activities, McCartney's opportunity for genuine alliances and continuing reciprocities in musical production seems to have been eliminated. One biographer has asserted that with the exception of his wife and family, "Paul has no other close friends—just employees and acquaintances" (Flippo 376). However, his preferred approach to his work should not imply that he has been indifferent to the influence of Bob Dylan; McCartney has stated:

> I think it was mutual admiration, certainly from *our* side, there was admiration. I mean, to this day . . . he influenced us and a lot of people. He showed all of us that it was possible to go a little further . . . But the nice thing about Dylan for me was that he brought back poetry . . . we got so huge that that kind of student thing got cut short, but Dylan re-introduced that into all our lives. (Williams 53)

One example of a more procedural professional connection has been suggested regarding the recording of Wings' LP *Wild Life* (November 1971), allegedly completed in three days: "Paul later said he had been inspired to do an album that quickly after reading in one of the music papers that Bob Dylan was now doing that. Paul said, 'If it's good enough for Bob, that's cool'" (Flippo 321). The critical dismantling received on the LP's release might well have been significant in discouraging McCartney from similar acknowledgments in the future.

The dynamics of the artistic relationship that might have existed between Bob Dylan and John Lennon are the most elusive to locate. On a social level, their contact seems to have been limited to irregular meetings over the years; on a performing level, there are no occasions when one contributed to the other's recordings, or when they played together on stage. However, Richard Williams believes that this is irrelevant: "[T]he brief attenuated relationship between John Lennon and Bob Dylan . . . was founded on something deeper and truer: the mutual recognition of two world-famous 25-year-olds who were travelling into uncharted territory faster than anyone could guess, and faster than either of them knew how to cope with" (45). As late as 1980, evidence of that mutual recognition was to be found in Lennon's assessment of Dylan's recent, and enthusiastic, conversion to Christianity:

> For whatever reason he's doing it, it's personal for him and he needs to do it. I'm not distressed by the fact that Dylan is doing what Dylan wants or needs to

do . . . I understand it and have nothing against it or for it. If he needs it, let him do it . . . I understand him completely, how he got in there, because I've been frightened enough myself to want to latch on to *something*. It's that wanting to belong. (Sheff and Golson 101-02)

Always the most conspicuous and vociferous follower and defender of Dylan among the Beatles, Lennon was also the only one of the four who directly acknowledged him by name in song. The lyrics of "Yer Blues" on *The Beatles* (November 1968) and "Give Peace a Chance" (July 1969) by the Plastic Ono Band refer to him in passing and uncontroversially. But in December 1970, "God" from *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, proclaimed Lennon's denial of Elvis, the Beatles, and Zimmerman; this, coupled with the fact that in subsequent interviews, he attacked Dylan for his change of name, and thus his inauthenticity, appeared to consolidate his rejection of the artist. However, since the LP's sparse, uncluttered production is far removed from the Beatles' output at that time, and much more attuned to the spirit engendered by Bob Dylan on his recent LPs, the implied rejection is a little ambiguous. In the same year, Dylan's book *Tarantula* was finally published, several years after it was written, but according to Dylan, a consequence of Lennon's demonstration with *John Lennon in His Own Write* and *A Spaniard in the Works* that rock stars could indeed write books.

For much of the 1970s, of course, John Lennon decided to seek insulation in a voluntary personal and professional retreat, releasing no new material between *Walls And Bridges* (October 1974) and *Double Fantasy* (December 1980), and making few live appearances. Privately, however, his musical activities continued, including three parodies of Dylan's work that are still unreleased, but whose titles alone display a continuing preoccupation with the man whom, according to Paul McCartney, "he loved . . . so much" (Williams 54). They are "Serve Yourself," a riposte to "Gotta Serve Somebody" (1979); "Mama Take This Make-up offa Me" in response to "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" (1973); and "Stuck Inside of Lexicon with the Roget's Thesaurus Blues Again," a pastiche of "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again" (1966). And a further demonstration of the ambiguity, not to say disingenuousness, inherent in his continuing evaluation of Dylan, was revealed in one of Lennon's final interviews: "For a period, I was very impressed with him. But I stopped listening to Dylan with both ears after

Highway 64 [*sic*] and *Blonde On Blonde*. . . . Anyway, I was never a fan. Of anything. I stopped being a fan when I started doin' it myself" (Sheff and Golson 102-03).

Given Lennon's tendency to alternate lavish praise and blunt criticism in his references to the musical output of others (including Paul McCartney) in interview and on record, it is not surprising that Dylan, too, should have been targeted in this way. What is slightly surprising, given the duration of their friendship, is that the two do not appear to have considered any joint compositions. Apart from a brief reference in his accompanying notes to the *Biograph* compilation (1985), where Dylan mentions their attempts to write a song together on a tape recorder, there is no suggestion of any other collaborative activity between the two. However, one other observation contained in those notes shows that just as Lennon had continued to evaluate Dylan and his work, so too did he wish to comment on Lennon's life and work: "The same people who praise you when you're dead, when you were alive they wouldn't give you the time of day. I like to wonder about some of those people who elevated John Lennon to such a mega-God, as if when he was alive they were always on his side" (Shelton 496).

Conclusion

That the Beatles and Bob Dylan were a major and mutual source of influence on each other, professionally and musically, is unsurprising. In any field, much endeavor is the product of a constant pattern of absorption—of expectations, processes, demands, and explanations—which determine the conditions in which such endeavor occurs. Apart from anything else, the sheer scale of the commercial success and artistic acclaim that accrued to each of them independently was to have considerable repercussions on the conventional practices of the popular music industry. Since both were working within that industry, it was therefore inevitable that, along with every other participant, they would at the very least be exposed to those internal influences.

Similarly, that they were operating contemporaneously in an era of profound social and political change meant that both were aware of, and thus able to respond to, external events. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas in November 1963 immediately preceded the Beatles' conquest of the United States. Bob Dylan's early career coincided with the activities of the Civil Rights movement led by Dr. Martin

Luther King, and later with race riots in New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Watts. Timothy Leary was expelled from Harvard for misuse of LSD in May 1963; in the same year the first U.S. troops were sent to Vietnam. In Britain, a Labour government, led by Harold Wilson, was elected in October 1964, after thirteen years in opposition. By 1964, the contraceptive pill, invented in 1960, was widely available; pirate radio stations appeared around the coast of Britain. Clashes between Mods and Rockers took place in British resorts through 1964 and 1965. In November 1965, Kenneth Tynan became the first person to say "Fuck" on British television. In January 1966, the Trips Festival in San Francisco marked the start of the Hippy movement. England won the World Cup in July 1966; in November, Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California. Israel emerged as victors from the Six Day War in June 1967; in July, homosexuality was legalized in Britain. Che Guevara was killed in October 1967. In 1968, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated. In September 1968, *Hair* opened in London's West End. Through that year student protests led to demonstrations in Britain, France, and West Germany. In July 1969, Apollo 11 landed men on the moon; and in August, Charles Manson's "family" murdered five people, including Sharon Tate, in Los Angeles.

Clearly, to explain the success of the Beatles and Bob Dylan by reference to one or more of these events—as some have attempted to do—would be simplistic and myopic. Equally, to ignore them outright would be dogmatic and obtuse. If the output of any artist or performer needs to be contextualized before it can be comprehended, then this is the context within which the careers of Dylan and the Beatles must be approached. And within this context, the concepts of synergy and reciprocity can be used as appropriate tools, or devices, to facilitate comprehension.

Masuda's analysis of synergy identified four basic characteristics as essential components of the successful movement toward a transformed and more desirable situation: common goal, voluntary action, active cooperation, and self-control. The foregoing discussion of Bob Dylan and the Beatles demonstrates that each of these conditions was present. The common goal for both was commercial success and musical development. Both had the traditional ambition of popular musicians to be the new Elvis Presley, but less traditionally—uniquely, perhaps—once that goal was attainable, both were prepared to deviate from the conventionally ordered and approved routes to maintain it. Decisions to stop tour-

ing, abrupt changes of musical style, even their refusals to conform to the obligations of predictable and routine questioning at press conferences, all testify to a shared belief that the artistic environment in which they found themselves could be dismantled and restructured.

It is evident, too, that their musical activities were entered into voluntarily and independently. There was no legal, contractual, or managerial compulsion for them to act in pursuit of the goals they had in the ways they did. Their precocious success ensured, for example, that for both of them the fear of the cancellation of a recording contract, which so stultifies and constrains many performers, particularly in the early stages of their careers, was absent.

The condition specifying that cooperation toward goals is to be active, rather than static, was likewise satisfied by both sets of performers. In fact, the range and quality of their musical and professional activity—including song-writing, recording and touring—especially during the period from 1964 to 1966, might stand as their single most remarkable accomplishment. Dylan's output in 1965 alone has been described as "an amazing, breathtaking burst of prolific creativity" (Gray 168). In the same vein, the Beatles' producer, George Martin, has acknowledged: "At the start, I thought: God, this can't last forever. They've given me so much good stuff that I can't expect them to keep on doing it. But they did. They amazed me with their fertility" (Martin, *All You Need* 166).

Self-control is the final characteristic of Masuda's formulation. The ability to articulate responsibility for decisions, to justify and maintain them, to specify conditions for change, to engage in innovative and radical behavior, is as I have argued elsewhere (Inglis), only to be found among those performers whose status is sufficiently high to allow for deviations. The Beatles and Bob Dylan are the clearest examples of popular musicians who enjoyed and used their status in ways which emphatically realized and celebrated artistic self-determination.

By fulfilling these conditions as they did, Dylan and the Beatles created a synergy that not only substantially fashioned their own musical and professional activities but in addition, transformed the contours of popular music in the 1960s and since.

Sahlins's schema of reciprocity is doubly useful. First, it theorizes the mechanisms through which the necessary conditions for the production of synergy—or "synergistic feedforward" (Masuda 118)—can be attained. Secondly, it substantiates the particular dynamics of the contin-

uing relationship between the Beatles and Dylan. Marked by a diversity of actions, which has included joint compositions, studio collaborations, live performances, and which spans thirty years, that relationship provides a consummate example of balanced reciprocity. Lacking any dimension of obligation, associations between parties are initiated and maintained through a broad understanding that there are likely to be returns of correspondent adequacy and equivalent value. These processes can only function efficiently, however, so long as there exist strong collective sentiments between the parties. In this respect, the repeated mutual declarations of affection, respect, and admiration from Dylan and the Beatles reveal that the necessary social bond was there. Thus it has allowed for, and been expressed in, three decades of musical and professional interaction.

Notes

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1. It should be noted, however, that other accounts of the nature of Dylan's reception by the fans offer a more conservative picture. British folk singer Martin Carthy, who attended the Royal Festival Hall concert, has said that he witnessed no signs of exaggerated fan behavior (Brazier).

2. The Beatles' own reaction to such praise showed a certain bewilderment. Asked in 1980 to comment on his use of Aeolian cadences, Lennon stated: "To this day I have no idea what they are. They sound like exotic birds" (MacDonald 75).

3. The first two singles released by the Animals were their versions of songs that had appeared on *Bob Dylan*: "Baby Let Me Take You Home" (April 1964) which was adapted from "Baby let me follow you Down" and "House of the Rising Sun" (June 1964). Both songs had originally featured in the repertoire of Josh White.

4. The consequences of his accident allowed Dylan to withdraw from a number of imminent activities to which he was committed, including a 64-date U.S. tour scheduled to commence in August and the completion of a planned hour-long television documentary.

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CHAPTER FOUR

VARIATIONS ON A THEME:

THE LOVE SONGS OF THE BEATLES

VARIATIONS ON A THEME: THE LOVE SONGS OF THE BEATLES

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Abstract — Résumé

Explorations and expressions of love have dominated the lyrical content of popular music for decades, to the extent that the love song can be said to be the archetypal pop song. A detailed division of »lovestyles« has been proposed by the psychologist John Alan Lee, who suggests that there are six distinct styles of loving. Through a consideration of the application of his typology to the lyrics of popular songs, it can be seen that the categories he has identified have relevance musically, as well as socially and emotionally. When these insights are employed in the analysis of songs written and performed by the Beatles, significant differences are seen in the approach to love between the group's earlier and later material. It is argued that these are not random variations, but indications of the ways in which their personal experiences and professional evolution were reflected in the nature of their music.

The Love Song In Popular Music: Loss, Affirmation & Reflection

The predominant theme of popular music lyrics has always been — and continues to be today — love. The principal styles in which it has been expressed have been the lament for lost or unrequited love, the celebration of mutual and/or genuine love, and the comment about the nature and importance of love. These styles were present in the major threads of twentieth century popular music whose convergence in the early 1950s, via rock'n'roll, led to the emergence of a contemporary popular music — or pop — and the multiplicity of sub-categories that continue to derive from it. The lyrical traditions of gospel, blues, jazz, folksong and ballads may have emphasised and maintained specific thematic styles differentially, so that, for example, blues was chiefly associated with loss and despair,

ballad with romantic affirmation, gospel with reflections on the universal virtue of love, but all helped to define love as the proper subject matter for popular music.

Furthermore, this tendency is unique within the performing and creative arts. All poetry is not love poetry; all movies are not romances; all novels are not love stories. Popular music, however, has been recognised as the appropriate context through which aspects of love may be explored. In this way, a special association exists between the medium and its content which is repeated nowhere else.

That association was quickly consolidated in the 1950s by the decision of many of the major composers within popular music to persist in the selection and promotion of love as the dominant theme of their work. Professional songwriters like Doc Pomus & Mort Shuman, Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller, Gerry Goffin & Carole King, and Felice & Boudeleaux Bryant composed very few songs which were not, in one way or another, about love. Singer-songwriters such as Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins, Fats Domino, Roy Orbison and Buddy Holly displayed the same pre-occupation.

At the same time, equally important conventions were being established regarding the temporal form in which such themes could be adequately presented to audiences. Because of the absolute necessity of securing airplay time as a means of alerting and introducing the public to a record, songs had to be of a length which would make them accessible and attractive to radio producers and disc-jockeys. Composers were thus constrained by, and consequently contributed to, some fairly inflexible assumptions about the content and form of popular music; the two or three-minute love song was, by the mid-1950s, the archetypal pop record.

At this point, it is important to specify the particular characteristics of such songs; I will define the love song as a song whose lyrics refer, directly or indirectly, to considerations of a positive and close emotional and/or physical relationship with another person or persons, and to the circumstances in which such a relationship might be realised or constrained. Such a definition is sufficiently flexible to give equal weight to the themes of loss, affirmation, and reflection.

In attempting to explain the nature of the association between popular music and love, several perspectives are relevant. The first is the observation that popular music in general, and its treatment of love in particular, have an important ideological role to play. In his account of mass culture as industry, Adorno drew attention to »the passivity of the masses which makes the consumption of light music contradict the objective interest of those who consume it« (ADORNO 1991: 31). Popular music is, for Adorno, one of the vehicles — along with sport and the cinema — through which the energies of the population are deflected from a confrontation with the economic and political truths of their condition, and from an appreciation of more valuable cultural alternatives. »[I]t is contemporary listening which has regressed, arrested at the infantile stage... They are not merely turned away from more important music, but they are confirmed in their neurotic stupidity« (ADORNO 1991: 41). The impact on audiences of the postwar development of mass communications has been assessed in equally bleak terms by Hoggart. He argues that familiarity with popular music helps to discourage a belief in the value and necessity of challenging an often uncomfortable reality, because »if the

songwriters are listened to, the feeling will not last long... there is always love, as a warm burrow, as a remover of worry; love borne on an ingratiating treacle of melody« (HOGGART 1957: 229). This critique of the bourgeois sentimental ideology of capitalist society as articulated in popular music finds its fullest expression in the assertions offered by Harker. Dismissing desires for love and marriage as forms of escape and fantasy, promoted by a dominant ruling class intent on maintaining its dominance, he concludes that »if blame is appropriate, perhaps it ought first to be directed at the weakness in all of us which encourages us to wallow periodically in sentiment and nostalgia, rather than setting about changing a society in which such refuges are necessary« (HARKER 1980: 50). Love songs are, in this analysis, a form of propaganda, whose implicit promises and explicit endorsements of exquisite personal happiness are akin to the National Lottery in their ability to dispel the formation of a political consciousness.

A second consideration centres around the commercial character of popular music. With an annual global turnover of around 35 billion dollars, it is for all practical purposes unavoidable that »the imperative of commercial success... is the dominant criterion by which recordings, and also artists and music business personnel, are ultimately judged« (NEGUS 1992: 152). Thus, the success or failure of a record is judged in terms of the quantity (of sales) rather than the quality — however that might be defined — (of the song). Approached in this way, it becomes apparent that a sensible marketing strategy will seek to locate those experiences or events in which potential consumers have some degree of interest or involvement, and, having distinguished such characteristics, will attempt to incorporate them into the subject-matter of the song. And it remains true that the pursuit of love is one of the central components of the set of expectations carried by many individuals, particularly in a society where the concept of romantic love is celebrated, and particularly so for young people, who are, at one and the same time, those to whom this concept is most readily applied, and the members of the largest music-buying sector of the population — 45 per cent of cassettes, discs and records are purchased by 15 to 24 year olds (BURNETT 1996: 83).

Evidence for the centrality of love in the lives of young people occurs in Schofield's investigation of the sexual and emotional experiences of adolescents. During interviews carried out with more than 900 teenage boys and more than 900 teenage girls, 29 per cent of the boys and 50 per cent of the girls said they were in love at the time of the interview; a further 21 per cent of the boys and 15 per cent of the girls said they had been in love in the past (SCHOFIELD 1965: 135). What this signifies is that half of the males and two-thirds of the females in the principle record-buying sector of the population demonstrated a clear involvement of precisely the type which is welcomed by the commercial songwriting sensibilities of the popular music industry, and which is further aided and manipulated by — in particular — the artist & repertoire and marketing departments of the major record labels.

The preponderance of love songs within popular music is therefore explained by the recognition and exploitation of the salience of love for substantial sectors of the audience. In addition, such songs themselves not only mirror, but increasingly define and structure adolescent (and adult) pre-occupations with love. »Pop love

songs do not 'reflect' emotion, then, but give people the romantic terms in which to articulate and so experience their emotions« (FRITH 1988: 123). They allow the ordinary to be perceived as extraordinary, they transform the everyday into the once-in-a-lifetime. Middleton has suggested that the language of these songs, »...clichéd, trite, familiar... may be re-assembled into new combinations. The point is to 'defamiliarize the familiar', to invest the banal with affective force and kinetic grace« (MIDDLETON 1990: 229). The love song thus profitably supplies an appropriate cultural resource which both satisfies and stimulates audience demand for the continued reproduction of its sentiments.

Thirdly, it has been argued that there is a crucial historical dimension to the prevalence of thematic trends in the lyrics of popular music. Friedlander claims that although »the dominant topic in rock music lyrics has always been romance« (FRIEDLANDER 1996: 285), the particular manifestations of that general topic have changed with cultural and historical conditions. Thus, he suggests that in the 1950s, most songs were about romance — »clean teen infatuation« (FRIEDLANDER 1996, 285) — and relatively few about sex. By the mid-1960s, while romantic relationships were still the theme of the majority of hit songs, additional topics such as pre-marital sex were more common; and in the early 1970s, lyrics dealing with provocative subjects like casual sex mirrored the growth of the permissive society in the United States and the U.K. Others have pointed out that even when there is an apparent abandonment of traditional themes, closer inspection can call this into question. One investigation of groups from a genre not typically associated with the love song — punk — has revealed that 21 per cent of their songs' lyrics were about romantic and sexual relationships, and a further 15 per cent about sexuality (LAING 1985: 27). What such comparative historical analysis indicates is the continuity of a tradition through a multiplicity of variations. Lull, for example, is among those who have recognised the conventional nature of popular musics' lyrical content, noting that even when those conventions appear to be breached, »... with some important exceptions... conflict in contemporary music is limited primarily to the problems of adolescents and the stresses of sex and romance« (LULL 1992: 3). The persistence of the love song across such historical and musical transitions may be seen as a definitive contemporary illustration of Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr's observation that »plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose«.

A fourth insight into the place and function of the love song within popular music stresses the political repercussions of the persistently sexist character of many of the industry's practices. In an environment inhabited at all stages of the production process by a majority of men (especially at the executive and studio levels), a primary function of the lyrics of love songs, from rock'n'roll onwards, has been to legitimate sexism. A man who addresses or refers to a woman in public (or private) as a »doll«, a »baby«, a »little girl«, risks censure and obloquy; yet this vocabulary has been refined and reproduced in the lyrical content of popular music for the last five decades, and consistently delivered to the very people it objectifies and humiliates. The contradictions are starkly, but not uniquely, illuminated through the current example of gangsta rap's categorization of women into bitches and whores; »its enormous popularity transcends divisions of class, race and gen-

der. But if the music has become synonymous with a profound misogyny, its artists can also boast a huge female following« (KOLAWOLE 1995: 8).

The consequences have real significance for the socialisation of adolescents. As the routine enactments and conventional wisdoms of teenage boy-girl relationships are daily articulated in the love song, attention has been drawn to the ensuing sex-role stereotypes to which adolescents are exposed, and may subsequently incorporate into their own personal relationships. »Boys are seen as aggressive, dominating, group-orientated, phallocentric, and girls as passive, serious, romantic, privatist, domestic« (MIDDLETON 1990: 260). These patterns are to be recognised not only in the lyrical assumptions of popular music, but in the participation of men and women in particular areas of popular music. So, for example, we find an extremely low proportion of women performers of heavy metal (aggressive, group-orientated) and a much higher proportion of women in new country or folk-rock (serious, romantic). Popular music therefore operates »as both a form of sexual expression and as a form of sexual control« (FRITH & McROBBIE 1978: 5). The love song, because of the emphasis on personal relationships familiarly contained in its lyrics, and because of its perennial position at the core of popular music's thematic pre-occupations, is doubly enmeshed in this process. To acknowledge this is not to overlook the significant part played by women as songwriters and performers — of their own and others' material — but to place it in its appropriate context. »Whatever the musical form, and from whatever culture it springs, where women appear they are still the exception, and therefore the exotic, the other, the ultimate outsider« (COOPER 1995: 2).

Fifthly, it is appropriate to consider the persuasive argument that popular music possesses a particular aesthetic which, amongst other things, privileges it in the communication of ideas and images reflecting love, romance and sex. The nature of this aesthetic is hard to identify. Bradley believes that »there is an irreducible, specific musical level or moment of meaning which quite simply *cannot* be translated« (BRADLEY 1992: 1). If this moment of meaning is emotional rather than intellectual, then love becomes an especially potent theme through which it is experienced; and several writers point to popular music as the most apt medium for the communication of the intimate. »Pop's power is the power to delight: the ability to draw people together and to find a common resonance in their own private feelings« (STREET 1986: 223). This unique quality can be seen as not merely one of a range of characteristics of popular music, but as its defining characteristic. Denski, for example, stresses the »primarily emotional character of music... the feelings that music produces dominate our relationship with it« (DENSKI 1992: 36).

Popular music thus connects with the emotional rather than the cognitive, behavioural, or physical responses of its listeners, and the mechanisms through which such connections are stimulated stem from the process of identification. Whether of loss, affirmation, or reflection, the love song typically presents an account of events or a view of the world offered by a sympathetic individual whose words invite a listener's understanding and confirmation. Condensed, again typi-

cally, within a time-span of no more than a few minutes, the song therefore possesses considerable advantages of structure and expression which are not shared to the same extent by the novel, the movie, or the poem.

In the same way that the characteristics of song make it suitable for the articulation of the emotional, so do they simultaneously render it less satisfactory for the articulation of the intellectual. There is an undoubted tendency among some socialists to dismiss popular music as trivial and exploitative, because of its cultural status as entertainment and its industrial status within global business corporations — positions which are themselves, of course, crucially connected. From such a political perspective, »good music is made from the results of struggle and suffering, and away from the world of 'capitalist entertainment'.« (STREET 1986: 58). The pop song has neither the time nor the space to present a properly researched, coherent, political analysis. All that it can do, according to the musician Leon Rosselson, is »make statements, rhyme arguments or chant slogans« (STREET 1986: 63). While this facility can certainly contribute to political objectives via its impact on fund-raising, consciousness-raising, artist activism, and agitation, the conclusion of many is that »the political potential of rock music is likely to be more an image than a reality« (WICKE 1992: 196).

Discussion of the emotional qualities of popular music leads on to the sixth, and final, issue, which is that of deciphering meaning in popular music. With few exceptions, the concept of meaning resides in the lyrics — but the lyrics of a song do not, per se, contain an autonomous, definitive meaning. A lyric is a text; a song is a performance. As such, they invite different interpretations; any attributed meaning is contingent, and can only be reached through a set of complex negotiations, involving internal processes of mood, personality and affiliation, and external constraints of time and place. »Songs and music *accumulate* and *connect* with new meanings and beliefs as they pass through time and travel to different places« (NEGUS 1996: 195). Critics of the tradition within popular music studies of assigning meaning to a song via a content analysis of its lyrics have rightly asserted that content analysis is a rather crude form of analysis. Frith, for example, suggests three trajectories along which the lyrical analysis of song ought to embark: the *way* in which a song is sung; the *genre* in which a song is located; the manner in which language *works* — as rhyme, as rhythm, as sound (FRITH 1988: 120—121). Approached in this way, it is easy to see how content analysis by itself would fail to discern the critical differences in meaning and intent (at stages of production, performance, and consumption) that manifestly exist between, for example, Frank Sinatra's version of »My Way« (*Francois-Revaux-Anka*) and that by Sid Vicious; or Led Zeppelin's »Stairway To Heaven« (*Page-Plant*) and the version by Rolf Harris.

However, before we move to the conclusion that because lyrics in popular music are open to subjective interpretation, attempts to objectively classify them might as well be abandoned, there are two points to be noted. The first is the assertion that lyrics themselves can be a focal point — for discussion, for the communication of ideas, for adoption and utilisation. »[T]he impact of words must not be overlooked. Analyses of lyrics throughout the history of popular music have

consistently demonstrated the pertinence of music at various periods« (LULL 1992: 21). The second, and more immediately relevant point for what I wish to go on to say about love songs, is that discussions about the *interpretation* and *meaning* given to a song are quite separate from discussions about the *theme* or *subject* of a song. Three (familiar) examples might help to illuminate this point.

Bruce Springsteen's »Born In The U.S.A.« (*Springsteen*) is a song whose subject is the contemporary American political culture; yet »some have described [it] as a patriotic anthem, and others as an impassioned attack on national politics« (GROSSBERG 1992: 152). While the theme of the Rolling Stones' »Mother's Little Helper« (*Jagger-Richards*) is an individual's reliance on drugs, assessments of its meaning range from an attack on the hypocrisy of the older generation, through an expression of sympathy with the unfair treatment of women as wives and mothers, to a warning against the dangers of drug abuse. And Gladys Knight & the Pips' »Midnight Train to Georgia« (*Weatherly*) is a love song whose final interpretation has proved similarly elusive: »Sometimes she catches the train; sometimes she doesn't. It depends on how you hear it« (STREET 1986: 225). All of this might lead us to adopt the following distinction: the theme or subject of a song is contained in *what* we hear; its meaning or interpretation is shaped by *how* we hear.

Taking these insights into the nature of the relationship between popular music and love into account, I wish to investigate the variations on the theme of love as it appears in the songs of the Beatles. As the most influential and successful performers popular music has yet produced, they present a particularly attractive subject for a case study, whose conclusions may, at the same time, be applicable to an evaluation of the work of other musicians. Before I begin that investigation, however, I wish to raise some general, but important, points about the nature and role of love in society.

Love In Society

The tension between the private and public domains of love is most aptly demonstrated by considering the sentiments contained in two opposing views. On the one hand, »[F]alling in love... is the most intense of all relationships [and] one of the most highly rated positive life events« (ARGYLE 1987: 15). While, from another stance, »it is big business... industry and advertising stalk the consumer with love's honeyed breath« (SARSBY 1983: 2). But while the division between private and public may be the most apparent of love's contradictions, it is by no means the only, or the most important one.

The illogicality of constraining intimate feelings within a legally-defined contract has not succeeded in deterring many societies from nonetheless viewing love and marriage as crucially interdependent (as at least one popular song has remarked). Similarly, the often minutely-observed rituals of courtship and engagement would seem to be at odds with the passionate desires of new lovers. Even when such formal procedures are absent, there are strong informal pressures and

conventions designed to effectively control the emotion and its possible outcomes, particularly where these may infringe expectations of age or class. »The theoretical importance of love is thus to be seen in the sociostructural patterns which are developed to keep it from disrupting existing social arrangements« (GOODE 1959: 47). The conferral of property rights has helped to promote the family as both the arena of love and the arena of abuse (physical, verbal, sexual); that the two are often confused is explained by R. D. Laing (1967) as resulting from a blurring of emotions and expectations in which the promise to love somebody is re-defined as a threat to withdraw that love. The understanding of love as a reflection of need and obligation or love as a reflection of freedom is a crucial and unresolved divergence. So too is the distinction between the conceptualisation of love in physical terms or in terms of mental and intellectual union; as well as the more specific question of the nature of the relationship (if any) between love and sex. Giddens is among those who have commented on the discrepancy between the apparent ubiquitousness of romantic love and its unfamiliarity to a majority of individuals, its absence from most societies, and the reality of its recent invention: »In Europe of the Middle Ages, virtually no one married for love« (GIDDENS 1997: 3). Finally, and axiomatically, there remain the contradictions between the ways in which we might respond to and experience love — as »a commitment to mutual growth and fulfillment« (PEELE 1975: 13) or as »subversive to any good social ordering of our lives« (COOPER 1971: 41).

Given the problems of analysis that these inconsistencies produce, it is hardly surprising that so many attempts to define love remain less than satisfactory. Bell's concentration on love as »a strong emotion directed at a person of the opposite sex and involving feelings of sexual attraction, tenderness, and some commitment to the other's ego-needs« (BELL 1979: 66) is unnecessarily, and, to some, offensively, heterosexist; as is Goode's view of love as a «strong emotional attachment, a cathexis, between adolescents or adults of the opposite sex, with at least the components of sex, desire, and tenderness« (GOODE 1959: 41). Giddens' reference to »a mutual physical and personal attachment two individuals feel for one another« (GIDDENS 1997: 2) overlooks the possibility of unrequited love; so too does Sarsby's more detailed suggestion that falling in love »is a physical and mental experience associated with the joy and anxiety of finding someone who accepts one and whom one accepts for what is prescribed as the most intimate and responsible long-term relationship with a non-relative in one's lifetime« (SARSBY 1983: 158). And other authors have offered a list of descriptive factors, which are not easily open to analysis, and which ultimately work only at the level of vague generalisation: »...it is the most basic human need« (HAUGHTON 1974: 181), »a demand that has to be obeyed« (HAUGHTON 1974: 182), »an impulse arising out of the very fabric of personality« (HAUGHTON 1974: 183).

One way forward has been to leave aside the attempt to formulate a comprehensive definition of love, and to endeavour instead to construct a typology of love and/or to itemise its principal constituents. An advantage of this approach is that it enables us to retain some sort of intuitive appreciation of an emotion without having to search for clinically observable patterns that might ultimately

detract from that understanding. A disadvantage is that such an approach permits, even encourages, partiality, since the essential characteristics of the emotion are never explicitly stated, and are therefore subject to individual review.

Nevertheless, Restivo believes that there are three basic forms of love: political love, romantic love, and mature love:

> Political love in its most advanced form is practised by political elites, usually men, and links sex, ruling power, and truth. Romantic love involves idealizing love, loved ones, and physical passion, and is a resource for oppressing and exploiting men, women and children, but especially women. Mature love is based on equality and caring, it is independent of the sanctions of church and state, and transcends conventions about the sex, age, and number of lovers (RESTIVO 1991: 117).

A similar separation is presented through their search for a structural model which led Sternberg & Grajek to propose an analysis of love as a combination of emotional, cognitive, and motivational styles or ingredients »that are best understood separately rather than as an integrated whole« (STERNBERG & GRAJEK 1984: 316). The love scale devised by Rubin also employs a threefold representation of love which incorporates affiliative and dependent need, a predisposition to help, and exclusiveness and absorption into a »conception of romantic love [which] has an eclectic flavor« (RUBIN 1970: 268). And various emotional, psychological, and social factors which can enter into the feeling of love for another person have been discussed by Bell. Described as »characteristics, without set manner or degree, that are often, but not always, associated with love« (BELL 1979: 72), the identified elements are idealization, caring, fascination, gratification of needs, respect, sexual attraction, companionship, and selflessness.

What makes these, and other similar contributions useful, is that they begin to allow us to approach love not as a static or unitary force whose expression and experience is identical for all, but as a complex state of being with potentials for change and growth, and which is sensitive to questions of balance and reciprocity. While indicating that there is a coherence — in terms of the components of the typology — to love, they suggest that each individual formulation — in terms of the combination of those components — can be quite different. »Love, however it originates, is made up of different components felt in different ways and different degrees by different people« (DUCK 1992: 35—36). This is an insight of major importance.

The examples presented above are characterised — indeed, it is their strength — by their reference to the reality of love; it is perceived as an authentic human emotion, a social fact: »Love is a force in society; it is not to be ignored« (SARSBY 1983: 2). But love in the context of popular music is (largely) fictional; the protagonists are not real, but the songwriters' creations. The dilemmas of love and the resolution of those dilemmas may draw from or reflect real events, but they are ultimately as fictional as the relationships between Hamlet and Ophelia, Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler, Annie Hall and Alvy Singer.

Lee is one of the very few researchers whose conclusions about the nature of love are drawn from an examination of both non-fictional *and* fictional literatures

of love, »ranging from Plato to Freud, St. Paul to D. H. Lawrence, the Book of Ruth to Doris Lessing« (LEE 1973: 13). Consequently, he has presented a constructive typology of six styles of loving — or lovestyles — which, because of its origins, might be particularly suitable for the analysis of depictions of love within popular music. As he states: »My concern has not been to define love, but to distinguish clearly the personal and social expression of the various conceptions of love« (LEE 1977: 173). The descriptions of each are mutually exclusive insofar as they apply to a particular relationship at a particular time, although a relationship may over time evolve from one style to another, and an individual may well engage in a number of differing relationships simultaneously. Lee's categories are as follows.

Eros: Romantic love, whose most typical symptom is »an immediate, powerful attraction to the physical appearance of the beloved« (LEE 1973: 33). The experience of love at first sight is not uncommon; the subsequent happiness may be (successfully) followed by profound and lasting physical rapport and delight, or (unsuccessfully) by a collapse of the relationship, especially when the eroticism is not mutual.

Ludus: Playful love, not to be taken seriously, but as a game, as fun. Flirting, teasing, flattery, and keeping one's partner(s) guessing are the central facets of a style which is »permissive and pluralistic« (LEE 1977: 174).

Storge: Love built around friendship and caring, akin to the respect and concern often held for a brother or sister. It is a style »based on slowly developing affection and companionship, a gradual disclosure of self, an avoidance of self-conscious passion, and expectation of long-term commitment« (LEE 1977: 175).

Pragma: The logical or practical aspect of a relationship is emphasised. Arranged marriages or computer-dating selections espouse its principle that demographic characteristics such as wealth, education, religion and age are significant factors in a successful relationship. »Its most salient characteristic is a rational calculation of a successful affiliative love relationship within a sociological context« (LEE 1973: 16).

Mania: Possessive, obsessive and jealous traits denote a style of love which is irrational, uncertain and anxious. Mania rarely ends happily; manic lovers' emotions are often beyond control or understanding, as are their demands for unconditional surrender and constant reassurance.

Agape: This lovestyle is altruistic and unqualified. Love is given dutifully and unselfishly without expectation of reciprocity. The concept of love as a universal compassion for others is often found in a religious or spiritual context. It is gentle and caring; there is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance. In interpersonal relationships, »Agape remains more theoretical than real« (LEE 1973: 16).

Now, Lee has stated that this typology refers to »only one kind of love, the mating or affiliative love we usually associate with marriage« (LEE 1973: 4); this is what most authors mean by »romantic love«. However, this could seem to imply that love is rendered meaningful not by the inherent characteristics the emotion and its expression may possess, but by the nature of the object at whom that

emotion is directed, i.e. a heterosexual other. If adopted, such an approach would exclude love for one's parents, love for one's children, humanitarian love, and so on — all of which can be expressed in the different styles outlined above. For example, the love for a God is not confined to expression in Agapic terms alone, although that might be the most commonly anticipated; it is equally capable of exhibition in terms of Pragma (recognition of a rationally-agreed contract through which certain behaviour in this world will be rewarded in the next), Storge (the practice of a »good life« based on companionship and honesty), or Mania (obsessive, irrational demonstrations of faith, such as the mass suicide of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate religious community in San Diego in March 1997).

It is my view that an equally valid approach could involve the utilisation of the typology on the basis of the (interior) emotion rather than the (exterior) object. There are good grounds for supporting such a view. Lee himself seems not to have ruled out the possibility of expanding the typology's scope when he states that »what I have to say about different kinds of loving often applies as much to homosexual as to heterosexual love« (LEE 1973: 5); and his suggestion that »the same methods may also be used on historical materials, to analyse the behavioural patterns associated with lovestyles in the past« (LEE 1977: 181) seems again to be an endorsement of its wider applicability.

As indicated earlier, the historical materials I wish to investigate are the songs about love written and performed by the Beatles from 1962 to 1970. The choice of the Beatles and their music is not indiscriminate; at the very least, it may illuminate the behavioural patterns contextually associated with love in a recent, and influential, musical past, and at most, illustrate more general notions about the relationship between love, popular music and society. »A detailed analysis of the lyrics of popular songs... could produce valuable insights, not only into the cycles within each type of love, but also into the changes in prevailing definitions of love in any social period« (LEE 1973: 193).

The Love Songs Of The Beatles

An initial attempt to assess the suitability of Lee's typology as »a new way of analysing and classifying popular song lyrics« (LEE 1973: 189) by applying it to well-known contemporary songs quickly reveals encouraging results (and suggests one minor amendment to its basic structure). Thus, examples of Eros in popular music include Eric Clapton »Wonderful Tonight« (*Clapton*), Dionne Warwick »I Say A Little Prayer« (*Bacharach-David*) and Minnie Riperton »Lovin' You« (*Riperton-Rudolph*). Ludus might contain Wayne Fontana »Game Of Love« (*Ballard*), Del Shannon »Little Town Flirt» (*McKenzie-Shannon*), Billy Joel »Uptown Girl« (*Joel*). Storge includes the Four Tops »Reach Out I'll Be There« (*Holland-Dozier-Holland*) and Carole King »You've Got A Friend« (*King*). Pragma contains songs such as Abba »Money Money Money« (*Andersson-Ulvaeus*) and Madonna »I'd Be Good For You« (*Lloyd Webber-Rice*). Examples of Mania would include Jerry Lee Lewis »Great Balls Of Fire« (*Blackwell-Hammer*), Elvis Presley »All Shook Up«

(*Blackwell-Presley*) and Etta James »I'd Rather Go Blind« (*Jordan-Foster*). And for the purposes of utilising this model for an inspection of popular music (and not as an alteration to the model per se), two sub-divisions of Agape become meaningful; one where love is specific and directed at a particular person, the other where love is general and unconditional for all other humans. Examples of the first might be Sting »If You Love Somebody, Set Them Free« (*Sting*) and Bobby Vee »Run To Him« (*Goffin-Keller*); examples of the second include Stevie Wonder »Love's In Need Of Love Today« (*Wonder*), the Hollies »He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother« (*Russell-Scott*) and Jackie De Shannon »What The World Needs Now Is Love« (*Bacharach-David*).

At this point I should make it clear that I do not intend to attempt to classify each of the Beatles' songs individually as the unique product of either John Lennon or Paul McCartney or George Harrison. Instead, I shall regard them as group songs; when an individual member is noted, it will usually be on the basis of lead vocal performance. Of course, it is true that some songs were written — wholly or mainly — by one individual. But there are three arguments for not seeking to identify the songs throughout in this way.

The first is that among analysts of the Beatles' compositions, there is little overall agreement about composition anyway. For example, authorship of »Every Little Thing« has been attributed to McCartney (DOWLDING 1989: 89), to Lennon (MacDONALD 1995: 101), and seen as a joint collaboration (STANNARD 1982: 32; HERTSGAARD 1995: 105).

Secondly, both Lennon and McCartney have disputed the traditional assumption that, apart from a few of their very early songs, they wrote separately. Lennon has stated: »I said that, but I was lying. By the time I said that, we were so sick of this idea of writing and singing together, especially me, that I started this thing about 'we never wrote together, we were never in the same room'. Which wasn't true. We wrote a *lot* of stuff together, one-on-one, eyeball to eyeball« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 117). McCartney has added to this: »We'd kind of write 80 per cent together, and the other 20 per cent for me were things like 'Yesterday', and for John things like 'Strawberry Fields'« (MILES 1978: 71).

Thirdly, it is important to recognise that within any musical community, there are reciprocal interests and affinities that influence the overall product in indirect as well as direct ways; these can be distinguished along two dimensions — personal and compositional. At a personal level, it is clear that Lennon, McCartney and, to a lesser extent, Harrison relied on the other group members for evaluations, suggestions and contributions to transform their subjective inspirations into objective realities. If not always an active contributor, each was, for the others, a catalyst, fulfilling the creative function of a competitor-colleague. The group's producer, George Martin, has referred to the significance of this: »Creative rivalry kept them climbing their individual ladders — and kept the Beatles on top. John would write 'In My Life' and go up a rung; Paul would go one rung higher still with 'Yesterday'. Often they would help each other out on a song... for the most part, though, they egged each other on by the brilliant example of their individual efforts« (MARTIN 1994: 70). And in an analysis of their compositional

method, it has been noted that »even when the Beatles composed independently, their songs often reflected a common reliance on specific compositional techniques« (O'GRADY 1983: 172), including chromatically descending counter-melodies, pedal effects and ostinatos, common harmonic vocabularies, and certain melodic mannerisms. While independent compositional tendencies did exist, »rigid categories are not likely to be helpful in trying to come to terms with their music. This is equally true in regard to the Beatles' lyrics... the obvious fact of the Beatles' 'group identity' should not be underestimated as a factor in controlling the quality and even the homogeneity of the Beatles' output« (O'GRADY 1983: 173).

With the exception of Lonnie Donegan, musicians who wrote and performed their own songs had been conspicuously absent from the British popular music industry through the 1950s and into the early 1960s. Unlike the Unites States, where the tradition of the singer-songwriter was well-established, the British experience, in contrast, still largely revolved around a belief in the propriety of Tin Pan Alley: the practice of professional songwriters providing catchy tunes to be sung by attractive young men and women. Performers like Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard, Adam Faith, Helen Shapiro, Billy Fury and Craig Douglas were among those successful singers who had helped to elevate this practice into a policy, and thus confirm an absolute conviction that this was indeed the appropriate philosophy of popular music in Britain.

The Beatles' insistence, right from the outset of their recording career with Parlophone in 1962, that all their singles and a large majority of their album tracks should be self-compositions was thus a direct challenge to the conventional wisdoms of the popular music industry, and an early clue to the innovatory elements that were to distinguish their later career. The fact that their determination led to success — they had four Number 1 singles and two Number 1 albums in Britain in 1963 — was directly responsible for major and rapid changes in attitudes towards songwriting. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards reputedly were first persuaded to attempt to compose for the Rolling Stones after witnessing Lennon and McCartney complete »I Wanna Be Your Man« in just five minutes (SCADUTO 1973: 103). And Pete Townshend has described how his future as a songwriter was determined during one of The Who's early recording sessions: »They said 'we think you are a great r&b band, but the Beatles have set a trend of groups writing their own material. All the Liverpudlian groups write their own material, the Stones write their own material. You just really got to do it.' And me being at art school, being able to say long words... I was elected to do the job« (FRITH 1978: 165).

Between the release of the group's debut single »Love Me Do«/»P.S. I Love You« (October 1962) and their final album »Let It Be« (May 1970), the total official output of the Beatles — on singles, E.P.s and albums — was 221 separate tracks. In reaching this figure, I have ignored re-releases, bootleg or unofficial recordings, and material made available subsequently (most notably on the »Anthology« series of albums). The figure of 221 titles thus relates to studio recordings officially released through E.M.I. in Britain and Capitol in the United States. Of these 221 titles, 196 (89 per cent) were composed by group members (typically

Lennon-McCartney); 25 (11 per cent) were cover versions of songs written and/or performed by others. Of the 196 self-compositions, 112 (57 per cent) are songs about love. It is upon these that I wish to concentrate.

Attempting to place each of the songs within the locations presented in Lee's typology required a combination of four different activities. The first was to carry out a straightforward content analysis — a thorough inspection of the written lyrics. The second was to listen to the recorded songs, thus allowing for the possibility of shifts during performance of phrasing, emphasis or delivery, which were not apparent in the lyrics alone. The third was to consult the principle published accounts of the Beatles' music (MELLERS 1973; STANNARD 1982; O'GRADY 1983; DOWLDING 1989; MacDONALD 1995; HERTSGAARD 1995) so as to take account of their information about each song. Finally, it was important to examine observations about their music offered by the Beatles themselves in a variety of sources — biographies, first-hand accounts, and interviews. While the categorisations arrived at may not be accepted as the correct, or even the only, readings, the combination of method goes as far as is currently possible in maintaining an equilibrium of critical distance and emotional empathy. The resulting set of classifications is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Love Songs Of The Beatles 1962—1970

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Eros	41	36.5
Ludus	35	31
Storge	12	11
Pragma	1	1
Mania	10	9
Agape	13	11.5
TOTAL	112	100.0

As might be expected, the largest proportion of the group's songs about love are in the category of Eros. The importance of instant and exciting physical attraction is perfectly caught in the opening lines of McCartney's »I Saw Her Standing There«: »Well, she was just seventeen/You know what I mean/And the way she looked was way beyond compare«. Similarly, Lennon's declaration of a sensual love that expects to be returned is evident in »Eight Days A Week«: »Ooh, I need your love, babe/Guess you know it's true/Hope you need my love, babe/Just like I need you«. The erotic quality is again demonstrated in the opening couplet of Harrison's »Something«, described by Frank Sinatra as »the greatest

love song of the past fifty years« (SCHAFFNER 1979: 125): »Something in the way she moves/Attracts me like no other lover«. Although very different in form — »I Saw Her Standing There« is »now rated as a rock and roll standard« (Mac DONALD 1995: 49) while »Something« is a »lovely ballad« (HERTSGAARD 1995: 297) — what unites these and the other examples of erotic love is a stress on the joy, the delight, the romance of love.

Next to Eros is Ludus. The understanding of love as a contest, a casual game played for fun, reveals itself in the promise made by Lennon in »I'll Cry Instead«: »I'll come back again one day/And when I do you'd better hide all the girls/I'm gonna break their hearts all round the world«. The characteristics associated with Ludus including a lack of commitment and an ability to move swiftly from relationship to relationship are emphasised by McCartney in the lyrics of »Another Girl«: »I don't wanna say that I've been unhappy with you/But as from today, well I've seen somebody that's new«. Harrison also displays the same playful preoccupations in »You Like Me Too Much«, where, despite the temporary separations and bickerings between himself and his lover, he knows that »I wouldn't let you leave me cos it's true/Cos you like me too much and I like you«. Whether cynical, narcissistic or cheerful, the belief of these songs is that playing the game of love involves rules, tactics, moves and counter-moves as the play proceeds.

Agape, and its references to a universal love which is always hopeful, is to be found in Harrison's »While My Guitar Gently Weeps« as he announces that »I look at you all, see the love there that's sleeping«. McCartney adds to these general reflections on love and humanity in »The End«: »And in the end the love you take is equal to the love you make«. We can see the enunciation of agapic sentiments towards a specific other in Lennon's »Julia«, a song »almost too personal for public consumption« (MacDONALD 1995: 261): »Half of what I say is meaningless/But I say it just to reach you, Julia«. John Lennon has said that the song was written for, and about, his love of the two principle women in his life: »Julia was my mother. But it was sort of a combination of Yoko and my mother blended into one« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 160).

Love-as-friendship is expressed through Storge. McCartney's »When I'm Sixty-Four« talks of a future love in which mutual activities and co-operation replace passion: »Every Summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle Of Wight/If it's not too dear/We shall scrimp and save«. Interestingly, McCartney's lyrics and presentation of the song as a pastiche of 1920s and 1930s show-tunes reflect very clearly the observation that »since Storge was a more common approach to love in the past, the old favourite songs are more likely to celebrate typically storgic attitudes... the old songs speak of taking walks together, kissing shyly, falling in love with the little girl down the street« (LEE 1973: 193). A more contemporary manifestation of storgic attitudes in love occurs in Lennon's »In My Life«: »But of all these friends and lovers/There is no-one compared with you«.

Mania, its possessive and dependent nature often accompanied by feelings of jealousy, varies in its delivery. In the advice given by Lennon in »Run For Your Life« — »I'd rather see you dead, little girl/Than to be with another man« —

mania is expressed through a warning of potential violence. Elsewhere, its typical anxiety and desperation are presented as a plea; McCartney implores his lover thus in »Oh! Darling«: »Oh! darling, if you leave me, I'll never make it alone/ Believe me when I beg you don't ever leave me alone«. In both cases — the threat and the appeal — the lyrics betray the petitioner's insecurity.

Pragma occurs in just one song. It conveys a practical and realistic approach to relationships and is based on the belief that a relationship can be made to work. McCartney's »We Can Work It Out« provides a telling example of the singer urging his lover to be logical and sensible, rather than rush into hasty or rash decisions: »We can work it out and get it straight, or say goodnight/We can work it out, we can work it out«.

Statistical presentations like this are valuable inasmuch as they quantify particular themes in the love songs of the Beatles, which can then be appreciated in the broader theoretical context of the literature of love. For example, the demonstration that more than two-thirds of these songs are erotic or ludic supports research findings which suggest that men and women do differ in their attitudes to love, and that »men's love is typically passionate and uncommitted, with an element of game-playing coupled with romance« (DUCK 1992: 39).

However, it is far more valuable to investigate and compare the evolution of their lyrical emphases over several years. Viewed historically, the crucial transitional period in the group's career began to develop in mid-1966, after which »one can detect an abandonment of many traditional facets of their career, the emergence of several new strands in their career, and a willingness to involve themselves in activities and debates that went far beyond conventional assumptions about what was considered appropriate for young musicians« (INGLIS 1995: 60). These changes were manifested in, and included: John Lennon's comments in March 1966 about the status of formal religions, in which he claimed that the Beatles enjoyed a greater current popularity than Jesus Christ; the group's decision in August 1966 to abandon touring in order to concentrate on studio work; their public endorsement of drugs (including L.S.D. and marijuana) and the convictions in October 1967 of John Lennon, and in March 1969 of George Harrison, for the unauthorized possession of drugs; their increasing immersion in individual musical and related projects; their involvement with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's philosophy of Transcendental Meditation through 1967 and 1968; the death of Brian Epstein in August 1967 and their de facto managerless condition for the rest of their career; John Lennon's decision to leave his wife Cynthia for the Japanese artist Yoko Ono in 1968; and the creation of the Beatles' own production and management company (Apple Corps Ltd) in the same year.

Such profound and concentrated disruptions in their personal and professional lives could not other than impinge on the nature of their musical output; in terms of their impact on the attitudes to love displayed in the group's songs, the contrast between the periods 1962—1965 and 1966—1970 is startling. Of the 100 titles recorded and released between 1962 and 1965, 76 (76 per cent) were self-compositions; of these, 74 (97 per cent) were love songs. Of the 121 tracks recorded and released between 1966 and 1970, 120 (99 per cent) were self-composi-

tions; of these, 38 (32 per cent) were love songs. Immediately, therefore, we can see two significant developments: an increase in the proportion of self-compositions; a decrease in the proportion of songs about love.

The first development can be readily explained by the confidence which Lennon and McCartney (and, to a lesser degree, Harrison) had come to possess in their own songwriting abilities. They had enjoyed unparalleled sales of their songs, performed by themselves and others, on hit singles and albums worldwide; they had been favourably compared to Mahler and Schubert by music critics such as William Mann and Tony Palmer; and they had been the recipients of numerous prestigious awards for their compositions (five Ivor Novello awards in 1963; two Grammys in 1964; three Ivor Novello awards in 1965; two Ivor Novello awards and three Grammys in 1966). Both Lennon — »If there is such a thing as a genius, I am one« (COLEMAN 1984: 233) — and McCartney — »People always say to me: 'Do you think you and John were great?' I say: 'We were fantastic'. It would be kind of stupid to say we're no good« (COLEMAN 1995: 61) — were able to assess their songwriting talents honestly, and to build on that certainty.

The second development, which demonstrated a far more radical contrast between the two phases of the Beatles' career, was the huge reduction in the songs they wrote about love; from nearly all of the tracks written and released between 1962 and 1965 to less than one third of those released from 1966. Given the numerous ways in which the lives of the Beatles merged with other processes and events from the mid-1960s, it is scarcely surprising that their music would come to reflect and incorporate the new forces to which they were exposed and the impressions that they made. Three factors were especially influential.

First, the decision to cease touring has been seen as crucial, in that it gave them freedoms and flexibilities to develop their songwriting in ways not available before. »The Beatles no longer had the millstone of madcap live performance tours around their necks. Now that they had some time and space, they were spreading their wings. They were showing us what they could really do« (MARTIN 1994: 24). Secondly, there is little doubt that from the date of their first meeting with Bob Dylan in August 1964, their recognition of him as a composer and lyricist whose reputation seemed to rival their own decisively shaped their future musical ambitions. McCartney has readily admitted: »He influenced us and a lot of people. He showed all of us that it was possible to go a little further. But the nice thing about Dylan for me was that he brought back poetry... Dylan re-introduced that into all our lives» (WILLIAMS 1993: 53). Thirdly, there is the inescapable fact that after several years as the Beatles, their lives and interests were simply more varied than had been the case earlier. John Lennon has commented: »The *depth* of the Beatles' songwriting... in the late sixties was more pronounced, it had a more mature, more intellectual — whatever you want to call it — approach. We were different. We were older. We knew each other on all kinds of levels that we didn't when we were teenagers« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 121).

But the most pronounced contrast emerges if we focus our attention exclusively on those songs written within each period whose lyrics are about love. As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, there is a marked inversion of themes.

Table 2: The Love Songs Of The Beatles 1962—1965

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Eros	33	45
Ludus	29	39
Storge	3	4
Pragma	1	1
Mania	6	8
Agape	2	3
TOTAL	74	100

Table 3: The Love Songs Of The Beatles 1966—1970

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Eros	8	21
Ludus	6	16
Storge	9	24
Pragma	—	—
Mania	4	10
Agape	11	29
TOTAL	38	100

While songs of Pragma and Mania remain at the same relatively low levels, there are significant increases in songs expressing sentiments of Agape and Storge; and dramatic decreases in the songs of Ludus and Eros. The full extent of this reduction would be even greater were it not for the fact that exactly half of the songs of Eros of the latter period appear on »Revolver« (1966) and are sung by Paul McCartney; conceptually, if not chronologically, they have far more in common with his songs of the earlier period, as the singer himself has indicated: »I have to admit, looking at all the songs I've written that probably there's a little period in there that was my hottest period.'Yesterday', 'Here, There And Everywhere', a little bunch of stuff that just came all in a few years« (GIULIANO & GIULIANO 1995: 130).

How can such abrupt and marked transformations in the group's lyrical renderings of love be explained? No definitive solution exists, but a number of relevant strands can be identified which coalesce to provide a framework of explanation, within which the question may at least be approached. The principal — and related — components of this framework I shall call place, person, and self.

Place: The importance of place as a creative impulse is especially significant given the Beatles' origins in Liverpool — an unsophisticated, industrial, Northern city whose distance (cultural and geographical) from London was one of the main reasons why the British popular music industry had shown little interest in its performers. Indeed, once the Beatles had begun to enjoy national success in 1963, it became inevitable that they would move to London, despite accusations that they were deserting their fans and severing their roots. The group's manager, Brian Epstein, commented: »It is sad and inconvenient, but it is inescapable that in England the centre of show-business is in London. This I discovered and with immense reluctance I decided... that I could resist London no longer« (EPSTEIN 1964: 95).

Sara Cohen has written of »a view of music and place not as fixed and bounded texts or entities, but as social practice involving relations between people, sounds, images, artifacts, and the material environment« (COHEN 1995: 438). Across all of these relations, there are strong associations between the locations in which the Beatles' songs were constructed and the subjects to which they referred. Many of their early songs are characterised by a condensed spatial and lyrical concern, which mirrors the immediacy of a specific, localised, personal relationship. »From Me To You« was »written on a bus travelling from York to Shrewsbury« (DOWLDING 1989: 41); »She Loves You« was »written on twin beds in a Newcastle hotel room« (HERTSGAARD 1995: 50); and John Lennon has said of »Please Please Me«: »I wrote it in the bedroom in my house at Menlove Avenue, which was my Auntie's place... I remember the day and the pink eyelet on the bed« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 142).

By contrast, songs from 1966 onwards use their sense of location as a point of departure from which to elaborate on other non-localised themes — of friendship, nostalgia, and history. Referring to »Strawberry Fields Forever«, Lennon has commented »I wrote [it] when I was making 'How I Won The War' in Almeria, Spain« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 130). »Blue Jay Way«, according to George Harrison, was composed »at a time when I'd rented a house in L.A. I was waiting around for Derek and Joan Taylor... it had gotten foggy, and they couldn't find the house for some time« (HARRISON 1982: 114). And McCartney, Lennon, and folk singer Donovan collaborated to produce »Rocky Raccoon« at the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Meditation Centre in Rishikesh, India: »The three were sitting on the roof of a building at the Maharishi's camp, playing their guitars, when the idea came to Paul« (STANNARD 1982: 74).

In addition, it has been asserted that the change of environment — from Liverpool to London and beyond — had a significance in a very particular way for their songs about personal and sexual relationships. Goldman believes clues to these revelations were in the songs from a relatively early date:

Lennon was employing the new medium of pop song like a serious artist, using it as a lens through which to scrutinize quietly and accurately the character of the strange new life he was experiencing in Swinging London. Just as »Drive My Car« is his take on the astonishingly brash and self-infatuated women he found in L.A., so »Norwegian Wood« was his rendering of the liberated women he met in the offices and discos of the new London (GOLDMAN 1988: 219).

While it is hard to resist Cohen's general observation that »music reflects social, economic, political and material aspects of the particular place in which it is created... changes in place thus influence changes in musical sounds and styles« (COHEN 1995: 444), it is harder still to resist a specific conclusion that place was an agent of considerable potency in fashioning the love songs of the Beatles.

Person: The concept of person refers to the immediate emotional and personal circumstances of the songwriter(s) at the time the songs were written. Detailed knowledge for each composition is impossible, although there has been no shortage of allegations about the origins of particular songs. For example, it has been claimed that »Norwegian Wood« told of »[John Lennon's] affair with a prominent woman journalist« (COLEMAN 1984: 276); that »You Won't See Me« marked »McCartney's disenchantment with Jane Asher who had temporarily left him to work in rep in Bristol« (MacDONALD 1995: 144); and that »Don't Bother Me« was written by George Harrison »while ill in bed in a Bournemouth hotel... because he felt low and wanted to be left alone« (MacDONALD 1995: 75).

While these speculations are undoubtedly interesting, what is of more general significance is the way in which the growing wealth and fame of the Beatles, and their heightened awareness of the complexity of personal relationships — via marriage, fatherhood, separation — were reflected in their changing lyrical perceptions of love, in which compassion and caring were seen as more important than passionate games. Commenting on the agapic sentiments of »Getting Better«, Lennon stated: »It is a diary form of writing. I used to be cruel to my woman, and physically — any woman. I was a hitter. I couldn't express myself and I hit. But I sincerely believe in love and peace. I am a violent man who has learned not to be violent and regrets his violence. I will have to be a lot older before I can face in public how I treated women as a youngster« (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 154). And McCartney's reflection on his adolescence and early adulthood is in many ways an archetypal embodiment of the Ludus philosophy: »My whole existence for so long centred around a bachelor life. I didn't treat women as most people do. I've always had a lot around, even when I've had a steady girl« (DAVIES 1968: 335).

Obviously, to attempt to pinpoint the date at which their attitudes towards women and notions of love began to change would be naive. But, at the same time, there is little doubt that »the four who stopped running, who stood still at last in 1966, looking curiously about them« (NORMAN 1981: 264) were very different persons from the four young men who had signed an initial recording contract with Parlophone in August 1962. It should come as no surprise that their experiences of a whole range of emotional and intellectual possibilities — including love — and the musical forms in which they communicated their

understandings of it should have changed, and would continue to change, from the earlier phase of their career. »Their songs were simpler in those days. The Beatles were simpler lads« (DAVIES 1968: 282).

Self: In utilising the concept of self and its relationship to their songs, the important facets are the explorations of spiritual awareness and the search for self-knowledge which claimed increasing amounts of the group's time and energy from 1966 onwards. Often naive, incomplete, and regretted afterwards, their preferred routes included L.S.D., Transcendental Meditation, primal therapy, Krishna consciousness. That they should feel the requirement to engage in such a search is unsurprising when one recalls the extravagant glorifications to which they were routinely exposed. Timothy Leary, for example, announced: »I declare that the Beatles are mutants. Prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power to create a new species — a young race of laughing freemen. They are the wisest, holiest, most effective avatars the human race has ever produced« (NORMAN 1981: 287). And Charles Reich, in no less euphoric a vein, claimed that in helping to construct a music that possessed »a relevance, an ability to penetrate to the essence of what is wrong with society, and a power to speak to man 'in his condition' that is perhaps the deepest source of its power« (REICH 1970: 208), the Beatles had achieved »a uniquely personal but universal view of the world... gentle, unearthly... the world transformed« (REICH 1970: 209—210).

While quick to distance themselves from such obeisance — Paul McCartney: »We're learning to be. That's all« (DAVIES 1968: 337) — there is no doubt that the paths they began to follow, individually and collectively, introduced them to previously unknown perceptions of the relationship between self and others which found their way into the group's music. George Harrison: »I'm fed up with all this me, us, I, stuff, and all the meaningless things we do. I'm trying to work out solutions to more important things in life« (DAVIES 1968: 339). Paul McCartney: »God is in everything. God is in the space between us. God is in the table in front of you. It just happens I realise all this through acid. It could have been through anything else« (MILES 1978: 120). John Lennon: »One thing we've found out is that love is a great gift, like a precious flower. You've got to be very careful with it. It's the most delicate thing you can be given« (COLEMAN 1984: 337).

While such sentiments do not preclude the possibilities of erotic love, they point decisively to the probabilities of storgic or agapic love, which in the case of the Beatles, found their simplest and most effective expression in the title and lyrics of »All You Need Is Love«, the song described by McCartney as »a message to the world« (DOWLDING 1989: 185).

This does not mean that the Beatles underwent a kind of »conversion« into deeply religious people; what happened is better viewed as a phase in their personal evolution, which worked its way through into their musical evolution in the mid to late 1960s. Had they survived as a group beyond 1970, it is certain that other phases and other pressures would have exerted their influence on the music they created — as has been demonstrated by the varied nature of much of their individual work that followed.

Place, person and self — individually and in combination — thus offer both a context within which »the enormous difficulties that a public artist has in finding a harmonious balance between public and private forces in his life« (ROOS & O'MEARA 1987: 35) can be illuminated, and an explanation through which the transformation of their lyrical approaches to the topic of love might be comprehended.

Conclusion

The songs cited in this discussion (although they continue to be sung and performed today) were originally recorded and released some thirty years ago. Since that time, the structures and cultures of the popular music industry have changed substantially, although there may be good reasons for arguing that at least some of those changes betray repetition rather then progress. Yet the prevalence of songs about love has never seriously been challenged, their commercial popularity has not been undermined, the continuity of themes has not been significantly broken. When the Spice Girls of 1996 sing »If you wannabe my lover/ You have got to give«, they are contributing to a dialogue between British groups initiated by the Beatles of 1963 who first declared «I wanna be your lover, baby/ I wanna be your man«.

Commonly held to be among the most intense, yet elusive, of all human emotions, love »has occupied a pre-eminent place in the art and literature of every age« (RUBIN 1970: 265). What I have sought to do is to investigate the characteristics of the ways in which four of the most recognizable voices of one particular age attempted to communicate their understanding of love. The typology utilised for this endeavour is by no means the only available tool. It is advantaged through its reference to fictional, as well as non-fictional, sources, but it may well be that other methodologies might yield equally provocative and valuable insights; if this is the case, such findings would be welcomed.

A systematic analysis of the lyrical content of the Beatles' music is long overdue. With only a few exceptions, accounts of their songs have tended to be subjective, anecdotal and inconsistent, demonstrating little in the way of informed, and informative, reasoning. This paper is not that systematic analysis. It is a beginning, a first step in that attempt, which merely suggests that an organised inspection of their songs about love reveals processes and patterns which reflect far more than assumed judgements about the commercial potential of hit records. It is one facet among many of the way in which the Beatles engaged in a continual policy of experimentation and innovation in their personal and professional lives. As an archetypal vehicle through which the private becomes public, and the personal merges with the professional, the love song is thus simultaneously unique and illustrative in its capacity to enhance our understanding of the Beatles and their music.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Sažetak

VARIJACIJE NA TEMU: LJUBAVNE PJESME BEATLESA

Istraživanja i izrazi ljubavi desetljećima su dominirali lirskim sadržajem popularne glazbe do te mjere da se za ljubavnu pjesmu može reći da je arhetipska pop pjesma. Psiholog John Alan Lee predložio je detaljnu podjelu »ljubavnih stilova«, sugerirajući da postoji šest različitih stilova voljenja. Razmatranjem primjene njegove tipologije na stihove popularnih pjesama može se vidjeti da kategorije koje je on identificirao imaju glazbenu, ali i društvenu i emocionalnu relevantnost.

Kad se te spoznaje upotrijebe u analizi pjesama koje su napisali i izveli Beatlesi mogu se razaznati značajne razlike između pristupa ljubavi u njihovom ranijem i kasnijem materijalu. Dokazuje se da to nisu varijacije nastale nasumce, već da su to nagovještaji načina na koji su se njihova osobna iskustva i profesionalna evolucija odrazili u prirodi njihove glazbe.

CHAPTER FIVE

"AND I WILL LOSE MY MIND":

IMAGES OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE SONGS OF THE BEATLES

»AND I WILL LOSE MY MIND...« IMAGES OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE SONGS OF THE BEATLES

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Abstract — Résumé

References to the mental distress conventionally associated with an unhappy love affair or tragic life-event are to be found in the lyrics of many songs in popular music. Implicitly or explicitly, such lyrics remind the listener that failure or frustration in personal relationships can have traumatic, even dangerous consequences. We have located our investigation of one well-known set of songs — those written and performed by the Beatles — within the context of the clinically observed categories of neurotic and psychotic mental disorders recognised by psychologists. In so doing, we hope to systematically analyse the ways in which various types of mental illness have been depicted in the group's songs, search for patterns in their presentation, and offer explanations for their composition. While such an examination may reveal much about the specific songwriting development of the Beatles, it might also help to illuminate more general contemporary attitudes towards the nature of mental illnesses.

Introduction

Mental illness, its particular formulations, and its dramatic consequences have long been common subjects within the principal genres of the creative and performing arts. In the theatre, the existence and effects of mental illness have invited critical interpretation from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through to Peter Shaffer's *Equus* and Alan Ayckbourn's *Woman In Mind*. The cinema has made spectacular

use of its various manifestations in films as diverse as *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock 1960), *Repulsion* (Roman Polanski 1965), *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Milos Forman 1975), *The Lacemaker* (Claude Goretta 1977) and *Paris, Texas* (Wim Wenders 1984). Novels such as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Malcolm Lowry's *Under The Volcano* and Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* have considered and examined its configurations. It is a perennial pre-occupation of poetry, as in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, John Keats's *Isabella* and Walt Whitman's *Prayer Of Columbus*. And opera has persistently and purposively utilised mental illnesses of many major characters in works such as Bizet's *Carmen*, Richard Strauss's *Salome*, Verdi's *MacBeth* and — from operetta — Gilbert & Sullivan's *Ruddigore*.

Such a tendency is not unexpected. Although the theme of mental illness may — as the above examples demonstrate — be approached and explored in different ways and with different emphases, there is a clear and consistent recognition that its emotional and dramaturgical possibilities allow for extensive and effective exploitation.

In the same way, the lyrics of popular music routinely refer to states or conditions associated with forms of mental illness. They accomplish this in three ways. In many instances, the song titles themselves are sufficient to draw attention to the messages they contain. For example, Patsy Cline's »Crazy« (*Nelson*), Joni Mitchell's »Twisted« (*Ross-Grey*), the Rolling Stones' »19th Nervous Breakdown« (*Jagger-Richards*), Little Anthony & The Imperials' »Going Out Of My Head« (*Randazzo-Weinstein*), Tom Paxton's »Crazy John« (*Paxton*) and alleged comedy/novelty songs such as Napoleon XIV's »They're Coming To Take Me Away« (*Bonaparte*) are among the very large number in which explicit reference is made to the current or imminent mental ill-health of (usually) the singer. Secondly, there are songs whose lyrics are specifically concerned with experiences of mental illness, in ways which cannot be predicted from their apparently innocuous titles. Examples include James Taylor's »Fire And Rain« (*Taylor*), Helen Reddy's »Angie Baby« (*O'Day*), Gilbert O'Sullivan's »Alone Again, Naturally« (*O'Sullivan*), Janis Ian's »Tea And Sympathy« (*Ian*) and the Cars' »Drive« (*Ocasek*). Thirdly, and most commonly, there is a huge number of popular songs which, while not about mental illness *per se*, typically contain casual or implicit references to the mental distress facing the singer, often as a result of his or her lover's absence or infidelity.

Somewhat surprisingly, this facet of popular music has been rarely remarked on. The preponderance of romance as the principal theme of popular music lyrics — the celebration of mutual and/or genuine love, the lament for lost or unrequited love, or the comment about the nature of love — has been well documented and its implications noted (FRITH 1988; FRIEDLANDER 1996). However, the prominence given to warnings or assertions of forms of mental illness (usually provoked by the pain of lost love, occasionally by the euphoria of mutual love) that accompany these articulations has been overlooked. The adoption by INGLIS (1997) of the constructive typology of lovestyles developed by LEE (1973, 1977) suggests that as with other fictional/literary conceptions of love, six forms or categories are common in popular music: eros (romantic), ludus (recreational), storge (friendship), pragma (logical), mania (obsessive) and agape (altruistic). While po-

tentially helpful (we might expect to find references to mental illness principally in the category of mania, and possibly in those of eros and ludus), it too fails to specifically address the significance of mental illness generally.

There is thus a place for a study which systematically analyses those references to mental illness to be found within the lyrics of popular music, and that is what this paper seeks to provide. By limiting the analysis to a concentration on the music of the Beatles, we hope to successfully examine one component of the specific output of popular music's most celebrated and influential performers and, at the same time, to illuminate broader lyrical patterns and practices. Such an examination may provide a measure of the role(s) that depictions of mental illness perform within the songs of the Beatles, and an indication of the contribution that these representations may make to the assumed knowledge of mental illnesses in contemporary popular culture. For if, as FRITH suggests, pop songs »give people the... terms in which to articulate and so experience their emotions« (1988: 123), the clues these references provide may well be incorporated into the evidence of their own lives.

Mental Illness

While the common public perception of mental illness may be centred around recognisable enactments of difference in individual behaviour, which demand supervision and possibly hospitalisation, it may be more usefully approached as a broad concept whose definition remains elusive. It is true that psychologists use the term in a general way to refer to abnormal behaviour, but such a usage suggests that it is possible to separate the normal and the abnormal; this in itself is a contentious assumption. What may be less contentious, but equally important, is the implicit assumption that such behaviour is seen as undesirable; it is *maladaptive* in that it interferes with normal functioning, until eventually help is sought, either by the individual or those around him/her.

Agreement on the status of abnormality is prevented by a number of factors which become significant when behaviour is assessed. First among these is the age or, more accurately, the developmental stage of the individual; for example, while it is perfectly normal for the two-year-old to throw herself on the floor (and stay there despite threats, appeals and bribes) when her wishes are denied, the same behaviour in the same individual twenty years on would be regarded as far from normal.

Similarly, the location in which behaviour takes place influences our evaluation of it. Walking naked around one's house behind closed curtains attracts no adverse comments — as Bob Dylan famously observed, even the President of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked — whereas visiting the local shopping centre in the same state of undress would certainly be seen as abnormal, even criminal, behaviour. On the other hand, nakedness may not be seen as inappropriate in some third world countries. The complexities of cross-cultural comparisons of behaviour are exemplified at their clearest by the esteem in which Hindu

devotees in India are held by their communities for behaviour (including rolling for miles in the dust, standing on one leg for many months, refusing to speak) which in most other countries would be regarded as proof of mental distress. Even in less extreme cases, the variations between two apparently similar cultures are indicative of the levels of disagreement that exist. Psychiatrists in the U.S. have traditionally been much more likely to diagnose persons as schizophrenic than have psychiatrists in the U.K. when confronted with the same behaviour (COOPER *et al* 1972).

The political axis of mental illness is best demonstrated in the postwar policy of the Soviet Union whereby many hundreds of political dissidents were routinely classified as schizophrenic and placed in mental institutions where their 'illness' could be 'treated' (FARAONE 1982). Under Gorbachev's leadership in the 1980s, responsibility for the mental health system was transferred from the Department of Internal Security to the Department of Health, signalling a fundamental change in that country's definition of mental illness. Such shifts are not unknown in the West. For 23 years up to 1974, homosexuality was classified as a mental illness in the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual; as social attitudes changed in the 1960s and 1970s, homosexuality was admitted to the 'normal' range of behaviours. The most controversial expose of such inconsistencies in attitudes to mental illness was the project led by ROSENHAN (1973), in which he and several confederates presented themselves to twelve psychiatric institutions across the U.S., claiming to be hearing voices. Once admitted, these 'pseudo-patients' reverted to their normal behaviour — a change noticed by other patients but not by staff! When their findings were published, one of the hospitals, fearing similar deceptions, rediagnosed 41 of 193 genuine patients as 'pseudo-patients'.

Not surprisingly, such contradictions, coupled with the historical, cultural and political dimensions that surround the utilisation and operation of the concept of mental illness, have led many to question its validity. SZASZ (1962, 1971, 1973) was among the first to challenge its existence, arguing that the label of mental illness today functions in the same way as the labels of witch or warlock given to those who exhibited abnormal behaviour in the past; for him, mental illness is more an outcome of the problematics of relationships than a disease or disorder of the nervous system. LAING (1960, 1964) and COOPER (1971) have persistently sought to redefine mental illness, through their assertion that individuals so stigmatised are simply those who do not conform to dominant expectations, and that their 'treatment' is often an attempt to coerce them into conformity.

Despite the complexity of these debates, psychologists have continued their attempts to describe and classify different types of mental illness in order to systematise their treatment. In the U.K., the categorisation currently used is from the Mental Disorders section of the Ninth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9); in the U.S., it is that provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV). However, these listings have the disadvantage of a complexity which makes them too unwieldy for practical purposes in a non-clinical setting; for example, DSM-IV lists 17 principal disorders, each containing numerous categories and sub-categories, all of which are to be ranked on a scale of mild-moderate-severe.

Consequently, some psychologists have collapsed the categories contained in DSM-IV in order to present the information in a more accessible manner. KAGAN & SEGAL (1992) for example, have pointed to five major groupings of mental illness: schizophrenia, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and addiction. Of course, it is likely that whatever typology is thus presented will be incomplete, over-simplified, and quickly outdated. The classification which we propose to use, adapted from the discussion in GROSS (1987), no doubt suffers from the same deficiencies, but has the advantage of being rational (in that it relies on well established divisions) and clear (in that it concentrates on the more common conditions).

At the most basic level, mental illnesses can be termed either *functional* (where there is no identifiable physical disorder) or *organic* (where there is a physical disorder, such as brain damage or a tumour). We will concentrate on the functional, which can be further divided into *neuroses* and *psychoses*. Neurotic behaviours are generally an exaggeration of normal behaviours; they are often precipitated by a stressful life event. Typically, contact with reality is maintained, and the individual has insight — he/she recognises that there is a problem. Psychotic behaviours are qualitatively different from normal behaviour. Often there is no precipitating event, contact with reality is lost, and the individual has no insight; treatment is generally against the patient's will, and is more likely to involve hospitalisation and medical treatment over substantial periods of time. Psychoses are generally regarded as more serious than neuroses.

There are six major forms of neurosis. *Depression* is seen to exist when the dejection that follows a life event continues despite the best efforts of self, family and friends to resolve it. Often a reaction to some form of loss, it is characterised by prolonged sadness, lack of energy, a lack of concentration, sleeplessness, and an inability to make decisions. *Obsessions* are recurring, irrational thoughts, and are often associated with compulsions, which are actions the individual feels compelled to repeat. While many of us experience relief and satisfaction from the organisation of thoughts and the completion of actions, there is no end to the pattern for the obsessive-compulsive patient, for whom such behaviour quickly becomes ineffective. *Anxiety* may take the form of 'free-floating anxiety', when, in the absence of any real threat, the individual suffers persistent irritability, sleeplessness and a lack of concentration, or 'panic attacks' when there is a sudden overwhelming terror, without apparent cause, but with real physical reactions such as chest pains, heart palpitations and breathing difficulties. *Phobias* are extreme and irrational fears of specific objects or situations, the most common of which is agorophobia, or fear of open places. While sensible fears work to protect us, the phobic patient avoids the feared object at all costs; in doing so, normal functioning is often impaired. *Hysterical neuroses* produce physical symptoms for which there is no physical cause. These may include sensory reactions, such as blindness or deafness; motor reactions, such as paralysis; or visceral reactions, such as coughing fits or pregnancy. *Psychosomatic disorders* are, unlike the previous category, real in their consequences. Often stress-related, they may lead to ulcers, high blood pressure, migraine, or asthma.

There are three major types of psychosis. *Schizophrenia* is diagnosed by the presence of one or more of the three 'first rank symptoms': thought disturbances, which occur when the individual feels himself/herself to be externally controlled; auditory hallucinations, which involve not just hearing voices at random, but hearing a 'running commentary' on one's actions; primary delusions, which are false beliefs in the face of contradictory evidence. *Paranoid disorders* are typified by a persistent and systematic pattern of delusions which develops gradually, and eventually results in feelings of suspicion, mistrust and persecution. *Manic depression* describes the condition in which periods of intense euphoria and elation (mania) alternate with unbearable sadness (depression); the energy, increased sexual appetite, constant talking and restlessness of the manic periods contrast sharply with the uninterrupted misery of periods of depression.

The Songs Of The Beatles

During their official recording career with E.M.I., the Beatles recorded and released more than 200 separate tracks, from the debut single »Love Me Do«/»P.S. I Love You« (October 1962) to the final album *Let It Be* (May 1970). Around 90 per cent of these were composed by group members (usually Lennon-McCartney, occasionally Harrison). As in numerous examples across various genres of popular music, many of their compositions refer incidentally or in passing to feelings of being 'sad' or 'blue'; but 28 songs go beyond mere protestations of unhappiness to reveal feelings symptomatic of the signs of those mental illnesses discussed above. It is to these 28 songs that we will direct our analysis.

At this point, we should make it clear that we do not intend to attempt to distinguish each individual song as the unique product of either John Lennon or Paul McCartney or George Harrison; instead, we shall regard them as group compositions. Of course, it is true that some songs were written — wholly or mainly — by one individual. But as has been previously discussed (INGLIS 1997), the lack of definitive proof of authorship, Lennon's and McCartney's own verifications of their joint songwriting activities (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 117; MILES 1978: 71), and the obvious fact of the Beatles' (personal and professional) group identity (O'GRADY 1983: 172-173) seriously undermine attempts to exclusively link specific songs with an individual author.

Although a close examination of each song's lyrics may be the most suitable strategy by which its particular reference to mental illness can be determined, it does not necessarily supply an infallible — or, indeed, the only — set of classifications. As has been shown above, one type of mental illness may evolve into another, may co-exist with related conditions, or may be differently diagnosed. The category to which we assign each song is that which we feel most accurately reflects the intent of its lyrics, but this by no means excludes other interpretations and classifications. Just as there is a lack of agreement among psychologists about the validity of a term like 'mental illness', so too there is considerable uncertainty about the connections between symptoms and diagnosis. Our analysis of lyrics must, therefore, be subject to the same *caveat*.

Neuroses

1. *Depression*: As might be anticipated, songs which refer to depression form the largest single group. Eleven songs were identified: »Misery«, »It Won't Be Long«, »Don't Bother Me«, »I Call Your Name«, »Tell Me Why«, »I'll Cry Instead«, »I'm A Loser«, »Ticket To Ride«, »I Need You«, »Yesterday« and »For No One«. They are all conventional love songs in which the singer (or in the case of »For No One«, the person to whom the song is addressed) tells of the dejection caused by the recent or imminent loss of a partner. Of course, any individual to whom a relationship has been important will experience regret and discontent at its end; these are songs, however, in which natural sadness is exaggerated into the inertia, hopelessness and fatigue of depression. They typify the familiar despondency of the depressive: 'Every night, the tears come down from my eyes/Every day I've done nothing but cry' (»It Won't Be Long«); 'All I do is hang my head and moan' (»Tell Me Why«). They reflect the deceleration of everyday life and the retreat from the routine: 'Since she's been gone, I want no-one to talk to me/.../So go away, leave me alone, don't bother me' (»Don't Bother Me«); 'I can't talk to people that I meet/.../I'm gonna hide myself away' (»I'll Cry Instead«). And they refer to the awful, bleak future to which the singer feels he must resign himself: 'Well, don't you know I can't take it?/I don't know who can/I'm not going to make it/I'm not that kind of man' (»I Call Your Name«); 'Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away/Now it looks as though they're here to stay' (»Yesterday«).

2. *Obsession*: Six songs indicate obsessive traits in the singer; they are »You Can't Do That«, »You Won't See Me«, »What Goes On«, »Run For Your Life«, »Oh! Darling« and »I Want You«. All are constructed around recurring thoughts and ideas over which the individual has little or no control. Often there is a specific and unfounded fear that a partner is about to leave, which may lead to threats or an ultimatum: 'If I catch you talking to that boy again/I'm gonna let you down/And leave you flat' (»You Can't Do That«); 'I'd rather see you dead, little girl/Than to be with another man' (»Run For Your Life«). Interestingly, both of these songs contain an implicit recognition that that singer's allegations may well be false, again adding to the evidence that his thoughts are beyond his immediate control: 'I can't help my feelings, I'll go out of my mind' (»You Can't Do That«); 'Well, you know that I'm a wicked guy/And I was born with a jealous mind' (»Run For Your Life«). At other times, the obsession produces a pervasive bewilderment and a conviction that *something* must be wrong, although its exact nature is unknown: 'What goes on in your heart?/What goes on in your mind?/You are tearing me apart' (»What Goes On«); 'When I call you up, your line's engaged/I have had enough, so act your age' (»You Won't See Me«). And on one occasion, the singer seems to be observing and commenting on his obsession: 'I want you/I want you so bad/I want you/I want you so bad/It's driving me mad, it's driving me mad' (»I Want You«).

3. *Anxiety*: References to a generalised and diffuse state of anxiety are to be found in two songs — »Help!« and »Nowhere Man«. Both point to general irritation and dissatisfaction with the singer's current condition: 'I never needed any-

body's help in any way/But now these days are gone, I'm not so self-assured/.../ Help me if you can, I'm feeling down/And I do appreciate you being around' (»Help!«); 'Doesn't have a point of view/Knows not where he's going to/Isn't he a bit like you and me?' (»Nowhere Man«).

No lyrical examples were found for any of the remaining three types of neurosis: phobias, hysterical neuroses and psychosomatic disorders.

Psychoses

1. *Schizophrenia*: Representations of schizophrenia occur in five songs: »I'm Only Sleeping«, »She Said She Said«, »The Fool On The Hill«, »I'm So Tired« and »Mean Mr Mustard«. Three are narratives, which tell of a third party, whose behaviour is typified by the perceptual difficulties, thought disorders and emotional disturbances associated with the illness. One person reports hallucinatory experiences: 'She said I know what it's like to be dead' (»She Said She Said«). Another is characterised by his remoteness and indifference towards life: 'Day after day, alone on a hill/The man with the foolish grin is keeping perfectly still' (»The Fool On The Hill«). A third repeatedly exhibits bizarre and inappropriate behaviour: 'Mean Mr Mustard sleeps in the park/Shaves in the dark/.../Sleeps in a hole in the road/ .../Keeps a ten bob note up his nose' (»Mean Mr Mustard«). Of the remaining two songs, one reveals the lack of volition within a disintegrating personality: 'Keeping an eye on the world going by my window/Taking my time, lying there and staring at the ceiling/.../Please don't spoil my day, I'm miles away' (»I'm Only Sleeping«); the other its severe sensory disorganisation: 'You know, I can't sleep, I can't stop my brain/You know, it's three weeks, I'm going insane/You know, I'd give you everything I've got/For a little peace of mind' (»I'm So Tired«).

2. *Paranoid Disorders*: Three songs — »I'm Down«, »You've Got To Hide Your Love Away« and »The Ballad Of John And Yoko« — present the symptoms of paranoia, particularly in the singer's mistrust of others and feelings of persecution. Two report his belief that he is an object of scorn and ridicule: 'You tell lies thinking I can't see/You can't cry cos you're laughing at me' (»I'm Down«); 'Everywhere people stare/Each and every day/I can see them laugh at me' (»You've Got To Hide Your Love Away«). In the other example, the singer (John Lennon) gives an account of his relationship with Yoko Ono, couched almost entirely in defensive terms, in which the actions of others are perceived with suspicion and hostility: 'You know they didn't even give us a chance/Christ! You know it ain't easy/You know how hard it can be/The way things are going/They're going to crucify me' (»The Ballad Of John And Yoko«). One might also speculate whether the implicit comparison with Jesus Christ indicates associated delusions of grandeur.

3. *Manic Depression*: »Yer Blues« is the only song to chronicle the agonies of deep melancholy and utter worthlessness which characterise the manic depressive: 'I'm lonely, wanna die/.../The eagle picks my eye/The worm he licks my bone/I feel so suicidal' (»Yer Blues«). As the one song of the Beatles which explic-

itly considers suicide, it demonstrates an exact correspondence with the feelings of those afflicted with the condition, to whom it can be so painful that suicide does appear to be the only means of escape.

Responses And Innovations

Perhaps the most distinctive facet of the Beatles' achievements as composers is their ability to write about an ever-expanding variety of topics, hitherto unfamiliar within the conventions of popular music. The five songs (there is also an instrumental track, »Flying«) on their *Magical Mystery Tour* E.P. (December 1967) provide a telling example. One song is about the excitement of a charabanc trip (»Magical Mystery Tour«); another a surrealistic attack on the state of contemporary British cultural values (»I Am The Walrus«); another tells of friends lost in a California fog (»Blue Jay Way«); there is a song about a schizophrenic or, possibly, an *idiot savant* (»The Fool On The Hill«); and one song is about other songs (»Your Mother Should Know«).

These and other 'clever, thought-provoking lyrics' (HERTSGAARD 1995: 176), variously attributed to influences as diverse as Dylan, Balzac, Edward Lear and George Formby, have clearly played a major part in informing many critical evaluations of the group, such as that contained in O'GRADY's insight into 'the determination of surprises and deviations within the conventions of a musical style' (1983: 185).

Thus it may be possible to consider the depiction of mental illnesses in the songs of the Beatles as just one example among many of lyrical surprises and deviations practised by the group: put simply, they were prepared to write about things which most other songwriters were not. In this way, the choice of mental illness as a theme would seem no less remarkable than, for example, their evocation of nostalgia (»When I'm Sixty Four«, »Honey Pie«, »Maxwell's Silver Hammer«); their specific use of female names (»Julia«, »Michelle«, »Eleanor Rigby«, »Polythene Pam«, »Dear Prudence«); or their songs about Liverpool (»Penny Lane«, »Strawberry Fields Forever«, »Maggie Mae«).

While such an analysis would not, in itself, be inaccurate, it would be incomplete. Only by positioning the songs within the dynamics of the group's career as a whole does it become possible to discover factors which might impact upon their origins. The significance of this increases when the years in which the songs were recorded and released are examined. Of the 19 songs which refer to neuroses, 17 (90 per cent) were written and recorded from 1962 to 1966. Of the nine songs referring to psychoses, all were written and released between 1965 and 1969.

Overall, the contrast between the character of the songs in the earlier and later parts of their recording career has been explained in a number of ways, including the group's rejection of the love song from 1965 onwards and the possibilities this allowed for the exploration of unfamiliar subjects (INGLIS 1997); the systematic patterns of change in the use of language that characterised the group's musical evolution through the 1960s (COOK & MERCER 1999); and the repercussions of

their regression as composers from conceptual thought to the primordial consciousness typically associated with the creative process (WEST & MARTINDALE 1996).

Crucially, the arguments contained in all of the above explanations refer to and, it has been suggested (BROWN & GAINES 1983: 134; TAYLOR 1987: 92), stem from the group's abrupt transition from consumers of alcohol to consumers of cannabis (and later, LSD) which was encouraged by Bob Dylan on the occasion of their first meeting with the singer in August 1964. Their subsequent public acknowledgement of him as a lyricist and composer whose example was to decisively shape their own future musical output was endorsed in equal measure by each of the group's songwriters. 'It was Paul...who was the most profoundly affected...he was thinking, he declared, *really* thinking for the very first time...he would never be the same again' (SALEWICZ 1986: 170). 'To George Harrison, Dylan was a revelation. Never in his short life had he met anyone so persuasively hip' (GIULIANO 1989: 54). 'McCartney and especially Harrison also became admirers of Dylan at this time, but it was Lennon whose work was most obviously affected' (HERTSGAARD 1995: 127).

While these are important observations about general developments in their composing activities, the signal shift from depictions of (generally) less severe neurotic tendencies to more disabling psychotic states is so abrupt as to justify particular consideration. More specifically, their lyrical accounts of depression came to an end in 1966, while their accounts of schizophrenia only began in 1966. Is this coincidental or deliberate? The attempt to move towards an answer requires an awareness of two perspectives from which the Beatles' songwriting at this point can be appraised: as a response to change and as an impetus for innovation.

The Response To Change

The importance of changes of *place* is crucial, given the Beatles' origins in Liverpool — a Northern industrial city whose distance (cultural and geographical) from London in the early 1960s was one of the main reasons why the British popular music industry had shown little interest in its performers.

Sara COHEN has written of 'a view of music and place not as fixed and bounded texts or entities, but as social practice involving relations between people, sounds, images, artifacts and the material environment' (1995: 438). Across all of these relations, there are strong associations between the locations in which the Beatles' songs were constructed and the subjects to which they referred. Many of their early (Liverpool) songs are characterised by a condensed spatial and lyrical concern which mirrors the immediacy of a specific, localised, personal relationship or condition. By contrast, songs from 1966 onwards (after the group and its management had relocated to London and effectively severed routine connections with Liverpool) use their sense of location as a point of departure from which to elaborate on other, non-localised themes — of nostalgia, consciousness and history.

In addition, it has been suggested that the change of environment — from Liverpool to London and beyond — had a very specific outcome; their songwriting

became 'a lens through which to scrutinise quietly and accurately the character of the strange new life...in Swinging London' (GOLDMAN 1988: 219). If 'music reflects social, economic, political and material aspects of the particular place in which it is created' (COHEN 1995: 444) the disruption of place (with all its challenges, discoveries, temptations and dangers) was an obvious and inevitable force in influencing the Beatles' lyrics.

No less important is the concept of *person*, which we use to refer to the immediate emotional and personal circumstances of the songwriter(s) at the time the songs were written. While there has been no shortage of allegation and speculation about the origins of particular songs, what is of greater significance is the way in which the growing wealth and fame of the Beatles, and their heightened awareness of the complexity of personal relationships — via marriage, fatherhood, separation, divorce — were reflected in their changing lyrical compositions. 'The four who stopped running, who stood still at last in 1966, looking curiously about them' (NORMAN 1981: 264) were very different persons from the four young men who had signed an initial recording contract with Parlophone in August 1962. It is unsurprising that their experiences of a wide range of emotional and intellectual realities, and the musical form in which they communicated their understandings of those realities, should have changed from the earlier years of their career. 'Their songs were simpler in those days. The Beatles were simpler lads' (DAVIES 1968: 282).

The third and final factor is *self*, by which we mean the exploration of spiritual awareness and the search for self-knowledge which claimed increasing amounts of the group's attention after 1966. Often naive, incomplete, and regretted afterwards, the routes they chose included L.S.D., Transcendental Meditation, primal therapy and Krishna consciousness. That they should feel the requirement to engage in such a search is not unexpected, given the nature of the adulation and vilification to which they were regularly exposed. Timothy Leary's description of them as 'mutants...prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power to create a new species' (NORMAN 1981: 287) and REICH's announcement that they possessed the 'ability to penetrate to the essence of what is wrong with society and a power to speak to man »in his condition« that is perhaps the deepest source of its power' (1970: 208) attributed to the group benevolent, supernatural powers. On the other hand, NOEBEL's warning that 'the Beatles' ability to make teenagers take off their clothes and riot is laboratory tested and approved...it is scientifically labelled mass hypnosis and artificial neurosis' (1965: 10) and the view of them in the Chinese *People's Daily* as 'monsters...[who make]...an unpleasant noise to satisfy the Western world's need for crazy and rotten music' (MARTIN & SEGRAVE 1988: 155) identified them as both communist conspirators and emblems of capitalist decadence. In the face of such wild and persistent exaggerations, there is no doubt that the characteristics they were attributed and the paths they began to follow, individually and collectively, introduced the Beatles to previously unknown perceptions of the relationship between self and others, which found their way into the group's music.

Place, person and self thus offer a context within which 'the enormous difficulties that a public artist has in finding a harmonious balance between public and private forces in his life' (ROOS & O'MEARA 1987: 35) can be illuminated, and a partial explanation through which the nature and transformation of their lyrical references to mental illness might be comprehended. For the other part of that explanation, however, it is important to go beyond analyses of the ways in which the group's music *passively* reflected external changes to a consideration of how the Beatles *actively* used their music as a vehicle of change and innovation.

The Impetus For Innovation

From 1966 onwards, the Beatles began to assume increasing control of, and responsibility for, their own activities. While they had insisted, right from the start of their career as Parlophone recording artists, that the songs on all of their singles and the majority of their album tracks were to be self-compositions, after 1965 (with the exception of the traditional Liverpool song »Maggie Mae«) no new songs which were not written by group members appeared on any of their releases. The definitive indication of the move from one career phase to the next was the decision by the Beatles in August 1966 to abandon touring, which immediately gave the group greater opportunities to devote time and energy to composing and recording. 'Now that they had some time and space, they were spreading their wings. They were showing us what they could really do' (MARTIN 1994: 24). The flexibilities and freedoms into which the Beatles were released by their withdrawal from live performances led to other demonstrations of autonomy: their decision to carry on without a manager, after the death of Brian Epstein in August 1967; the creation and production of their TV film *Magical Mystery Tour* in December 1967; the establishment of Apple in 1968; and their increasing involvement in individual projects (INGLIS 1995).

But it is the fundamental shift in the nature of their music that remains the most compelling evidence of change. The Beatles have acknowledged that, like many popular songwriters, much of their early work was frankly *synthetic* and driven by a commercial professional strategy in which themes, melodies, verbal phrases and instrumental solos were assembled and reassembled in order to satisfy contractual or commercial obligations. By contrast, songs from the later period tend to be *organic*, embodying a perception of each new composition as a fresh statement, a unique creation, an opportunity for communication, which is organised and constructed for reasons other than commercial appeal alone.

A useful typology of the ways in which songwriters themselves understand and express the communicative — as opposed to the commercial — properties of their music has been provided by DENSKI (1992). He distinguishes between magical communication (music as a mysterious force), social communication (music as a political tool), personal communication (music as the consideration and analysis of private emotions), formal communication (music as technology, sound or texture) and adult communication (music as a commentary on the realities of adult life).

In various first-hand accounts of the writing of their later songs, the Beatles have confirmed the validity of each of these categories. »Yesterday« is explained by Paul McCartney as an example of magical communication: 'I woke up with a lovely tune in my head...I thought, No, I've never written like this before. But I had the tune, which was the most magic thing. And you have to ask yourself, where did it come from? But you don't ask yourself too much or it might go away' (MILES 1997: 201-202). Social communication is typified in John Lennon's account of »Revolution« as 'a statement of the Beatles' position on Vietnam and the Beatles' position on revolution...I *absolutely* wanted the Beatles to say something about the war' (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 158). The characteristics of personal communication are demonstrated in »In My Life«, seen by Lennon as 'a remembrance of friends and lovers of the past. And it was, I think, my first real major piece of work. Up till then it had all been sort of glib and throwaway' (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 151). »Revolution 9« is Lennon's attempt at formal communication: 'All those different bits of sound and noises are all compiled...I fed them all in and mixed them live. I did a few mixes until I got one I liked. Once I heard her [Yoko's] stuff - not just the screeching and the howling but her sort of word pieces and talking and breathing and all this strange stuff...I wanted to do one' (SHEFF & GOLSON 1981: 159). And »Hey Jude«, written by McCartney for six-years-old Julian Lennon after his parents' divorce, is an example of adult communication: 'I decided to pay them a visit and say »How are you doing? What's happening?« [...] I started with the idea »Hey Jules«...don't make it bad, take a sad song and make it better...I knew it was not going to be easy for him. I always feel sorry for kids in divorces' (MILES 1997: 465).

The Beatles' ability to successfully operate within and across these categories confirmed their transition from commercial to communicative songwriters. But it has to be seen within the context of the assertions of professional independence that defined their career from 1966. Their songwriting, like their film-making, their entrepreneurial activities and their increasing emphasis on individual autonomy, became a vehicle for radical and innovative developments.

By employing the words of their songs to approach entirely new subjects (how many other songs are there about a sheepdog or a traffic warden or a submarine or a Victorian circus or a box of chocolates?) they were able to distance themselves from the familiar conventions of the pop song. Thus, the move away from writing about the depression that (stereo)typically follows unrequited adolescent love to exploring more debilitating and unfamiliar conditions such as schizophrenia is one more example of the lyrical expansion that accompanied their later songs. As lyricists and composers, they can be seen to have used the opportunities those songs gave them in relatively unusual and innovative ways.

Conclusion

Composers have been defined as 'the truly inventive ingredient in pop music' (WALE 1972: 20); the Beatles, in their turn, were described in *The Observer* as 'the greatest composers since Schubert' (NORMAN 1981: 346); moreover, it has been

argued that 'they took control of music away from...professional songwriters and made it the responsibility of the individual performing artists' (DOWLDING 1989: 17).

Each of these claims may be contested, but the fact that they have been repeated so often invites, at the very least, a consideration of their implications. In this discussion, we have sought to engage in such considerations, using the relatively unusual theme of mental illness as the specific example through which we might be able to make more general observations.

The division between the Beatles' references to mental illness in the early and later parts of their career can be seen in part as a response by the songwriters to external changes which worked their way through into the music, and in part as a deliberate display of their increased professional autonomy and control. In this respect, the creative process within popular music may be no different from the creative process within any other of the performing arts. After all, the balance between external constraints and individual inspiration has influenced the work of artists and playwrights engaged by patrons for centuries. While the Beatles may not have recognised the existence of patrons (although in other circumstances the involvement of A and R staff, managers, and record company executives might not be too dissimilar), there is no doubt that factors external to the production of music *per se* were as important in determining the nature of their musical output as were their own ideas and idiosyncrasies.

All this is not to suggest that the 'meaning' of a song can be discerned from its lyrics; we have been concerned with the subject or theme as revealed through its lyrics. Lyrics themselves remain a focal point — for discussion, for the circulation of ideas, for adoption and utilisation. 'The impact of words must not be overlooked. Analyses of lyrics throughout the history of popular music have consistently demonstrated the pertinence of music at various periods' (LULL 1992: 21). Discussions about the interpretation or meaning given to a song are quite separate from discussions about the theme or subject of a song. The theme or subject of a song is contained in *what* we hear; its meaning or interpretation is shaped by *how* we hear.

What we hear in these songs of the Beatles are words which 'invoke and convey the joy, sorrow, struggle, laughter, wisdom, anger, love, fear, and other emotions and experiences that make up the human condition' (HERTSGAARD 1995: 317). At the same time, they are indicative of the Beatles' creative synthesis (as songwriters) of the subjective and the objective, and illustrative of their capacity to expand the range of topical possibilities beyond the traditional confines of popular music, into which they themselves had only recently been admitted.

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Sažetak

»I IZGUBIT ĆU PAMET...«
SLIKE DUŠEVNOG OBOLJENJA U PJESMAMA BEATLESA

Zajedno s drugim žanrovima izvoditeljskih umjetnosti popularna je glazba trajno koristila temu duševnog oboljenja, uglavnom kao predmet koji ilustrira emotivnu nevolju prouzročenu promašajem u ljubavi. Međutim, do sada nije bilo pokušaja da se ova lirska konvencija dovede u vezu s onim kategorijama duševnih smetnji koje priznaju i kojima se bave psiholozi. Karakteristično se razlikuju dva tipa funkcionalnog duševnog oboljenja: neuroze — koje se dalje mogu dijeliti na depresije, opsesije, tjeskobu, fobije, histerične neuroze i psihosomatske poremećaje — i psihoze, koje se dalje mogu dijeliti na shizofreniju, paranoidne poremećaje i manijakalnu depresiju.

Mi smo usredotočili našu pozornost na pjesme koje su napisali i izvodili Beatlesi. Otkrili smo da među onim njihovim kompozicijama koje se odnose eksplicitno na okolnosti duševnog oboljenja najveći je dio onih koje istražuju neuroze napisan i snimljen u ranoj fazi njihove karijere (1962.-66.), dok su sve one koje se odnose na psihoze bile napisane i snimljene u kasnijoj fazi njihove karijere (1965.-69.). Promatrano u vezi s općim razvitkom njihovih interesa u pisanju pjesama, takav se znakovit prijelaz može interpretirati kao ilustracija načina na koji je glazba te grupe pasivno odražavala vanjske i ambijentalne promjene, te kao očitovanje njihove odluke da svoju glazbu aktivno upotrebljavaju kao sredstvo inovacije. Dok relativno neistražena tema duševnog oboljenja može biti tek jedan primjer za lirske interese Beatlesa s jedne strane, s druge ona pruža jasnu indikaciju njihove sposobnosti da prošire opseg tema koji im je bio dostupan kao kompozitorima popularne glazbe.

CHAPTER SIX

MEN OF IDEAS?

POPULAR MUSIC, ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM AND THE BEATLES

1 Men of Ideas? Popular Music, Anti-Intellectualism and the Beatles

Ian Inglis

Until quite recently popular culture has lacked a 'serious' discourse. It was invariably disassociated from intellectual life, usually considered its demonic antithesis, and ... completely under-represented in theory, except by negation. (Chambers 1996: 204)

Each man ... carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher', an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought. (Gramsci 1971: 9)

We learned more from a three minute record than we ever learned in school. (Bruce Springsteen, 'No Surrender')

Although the Bruce Springsteen song 'No Surrender' does not go on to reveal which three-minute record provided so much, in December 1980 on the evening following John Lennon's murder in New York, the singer had prefaced his show at The Spectrum in Philadelphia by declaring: 'The first song I ever learned was a record called 'Twist And Shout' ... if it wasn't for John Lennon, we'd all be in a different place tonight' (Garbarini *et al.* 1980: 22).

However, attempts to situate the place (or places) to which popular music can direct its listeners are repeatedly confounded by a broad reluctance within popular music to claim publicly for itself anything more than a role as a mere provider-of-entertainment, and by a well-established tendency outside popular music to dismiss those claims (from performers or researchers) which appear to endorse any greater ambition as pretentious and risible. Whether such attitudes reflect a jealously-guarded elitism, manifested in a conscious hostility

to newer forms of artistic activity and a reluctance to relinquish cultural advantage, or a real unfamiliarity with the practices surrounding the production and consumption of popular music that encourages the retention of fallacious and stereotypical judgements, the result is the same. Its performers, its products and its participants have been routinely trivialized and consistently referenced through a discourse of anti-intellectualism which admits the physical, the emotional and the behavioural impacts of popular music, but which finds no place for the cognitive. 'Of course, pop is a form crying out not to be written about. It is physical, sensual, of the body rather than the mind, and in some ways it is anti-intellectual; let yourself go, don't think – feel' (Kureishi and Savage 1995: xix).

That this imbalance is now being (or about to be) redressed is by no means certain. While it is undoubtedly true that the sheer scale and diversity of the international popular music industry (an annual global turnover of record, tape and CD sales approaching $40 billion) have stimulated scrutiny from a multiplicity of academic disciplines, it remains equally true that the popular media (and, to some extent, the specialist music media) continue to identify the vicissitudes of a musician's personal life as more significant than the circumstances and consequences of his or her professional output. Although the adoption of such a perspective is by no means entirely absent from critical appraisals of, for example, the poet, the novelist, or the painter, it is rarely as marked as it is when applied to the popular musician, whose position, in this respect, more closely resembles that of the movie star.

And on those occasions when a 'serious' discourse is practised, the research often yields little in the way of agreement. Observations on the political functions of popular music, for example, vary from conclusions which emphasize that 'music and musicians *can* play a very effective role in radically changing the political and cultural environment of which they are a part' (Wicke 1992: 196) to the assertion that 'the most rock can hope to communicate ... is simple-minded slogans' (Rosselson 1979: 46). In fact, if anything, the earlier comparison with movies understates the extent of the uncertainty surrounding popular music and politics, since there has long been an implicit recognition of the role of film as a vehicle for ideas. The Italian government of the 1930s and the United States government of the 1940s were among those who established fiscal programmes that directly rewarded film-makers whose movies presented positive or sympathetic images of their country. And opposition to the possibility of alternative opinions was most starkly exemplified by the

House Un-American Activities Committee investigations into alleged Communist sympathizers in Hollywood in the early 1950s, which united elements of the movie industry, the news media and the political/military establishment in their explicit declaration of the relationship between film and ideology.

By contrast, popular music has largely (though not completely) evaded that kind of official interrogation, and in some ways this is surprising. On the one hand, the lyrics of songs as diverse as the Small Faces' 'Itchycoo Park' (*Marriott–Lane*), Alice Cooper's 'School Is Out' (*Cooper–Bruce–Buxton–Dunaway–Smith*) and Pink Floyd's 'Another Brick In The Wall' (*Waters*) are among many to have contested the authority of traditional sources of knowledge and its delivery. On the other hand, there is abundant argument in support of music's capacity to assemble and communicate ideas, which it would be unwise to ignore. Such testimonies are to be found in numerous sociological and historical commentaries: 'Popular music is one of the ways that we come to know who we are and what we want' (Street 1986: 226). They are also to be found in the personal reflections of many participants and consumers, such as Keith Richards:

> I really wanted to learn when I was a kid. I really did ... and then the assholes manage to turn the whole thing around ... and then you just hate the learning thing. You don't wanna learn anymore. So you get thrown out of school and you get into art college and it's the same thing. [But] there's always some cat who's ... going through his latest Jack Elliott or Woody Guthrie number, and you discover Robert Johnson, *and it all comes together for you*. (Scaduto 1973: 37–8; emphasis added)

Yet while it is undoubtedly the case that a general reluctance to invest popular music with a role in which ideas are seen as significant does continue to exert its influence inside and outside the industry, it is also true that the activities of a small number of performers have attracted attention and investigation for reasons other than those typically associated with the crudely commercial concerns of the industry. In recent years, they have included Madonna's apparent ability to re-invent herself (boy toy–chameleon–diva), and, in doing so, to provide demonstrations of power and control over her own sexuality for others to follow; Paul Simon's collaboration with musicians from Southern Africa and its implications for the status of Third World music; and the poetry of Bob Dylan, who was himself nominated for the 1997 Nobel Prize for Literature.

However, the performers whose musical and professional careers have been most carefully examined in this way remain the Beatles. Their ability to transcend the role of entertainers and to simultaneously assume, or accept, the role of teachers – of men of ideas – has been upheld in a variety of forms. Some, including Timothy Leary's representation of them as incarnations of a deity are embellished and extravagant: 'I declare that the Beatles are mutants. Prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power to create a new species – a young race of laughing freemen. They are the wisest, holiest, most effective avatars the human race has ever produced' (Norman 1981: 287). Others are more restrained in their assessment: 'By virtue of their own example, the Beatles gave people faith in their ability to change themselves and the world around them' (Hertsgaard 1995: 191). And some, as in the recollections of Todd Rundgren, point to a more directly personal impact: '[T]he biggest influence of all was the Beatles. At the time, it involved much more than music. It was a whole connection with your peers and an idea of an alternative method of becoming successful besides going to college and becoming a doctor or lawyer' (Somach and Sharp 1995: 230).

Claims of this sort clearly invite a re-evaluation, within the contours of popular culture, of the Beatles in terms that go beyond the purely musical to encompass the intellectual. It is important here to distinguish between two of the most salient criteria by which intellectual contributions are assessed – their longevity and their impact. It may well be (although I would caution against too premature an adoption of the view) that the durability or longevity of ideas deriving from those referred to as 'pop intellectuals' is relatively weak; in an appraisal of the best known (his list of names includes Susan Sontag, Tom Wolfe, Buckminster Fuller, Andy Warhol, Bob Dylan, John Cage and John Lennon) Ross concludes that 'none have retained any lasting theoretical respect of the sort that is still accorded to the older liberal intelligentsia' (1989: 114).

But the force of the impact of the Beatles' activities is much more difficult to dismiss. Inasmuch as the group and its members have been perceived to co-exist at a number of differing levels – as a historical event, as a cultural phenomenon, as musical innovators, and as role models for many millions of young people around the world – their refusal to conform to the conventional wisdoms and routine practices of a particular artistic environment (and the similar refusal of many of the pop intellectuals with whom they have been bracketed) does

seem to conform very closely to some of the conditions of intellectual activity outlined by others.

C. Wright Mills, for example, has noted the importance of fresh perceptions: 'The independent artist and intellectual are among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things' (1963: 299). Gramsci has referred to the intellectual's ability to influence profoundly – even if only for a while – social reality: '[I]ntellectual activity must also be distinguished in terms of its intrinsic characteristics, according to levels ... which represent *a real qualitative difference*' (1971: 13; emphasis added). Eyerman, whose reference to intellectuals generally views them as 'part of an historical process in which human actors reinvent cultural traditions in different contexts' (1994: 4) also proposes a concept of 'movement intellectuals' – individuals whose position within specific social movements permits them to utilize those spaces through which new forms of knowledge and cognitive identities are produced; the analysis may be particularly helpful in its application to popular music, which is specified as 'an important, though relatively neglected, channel for the transference of political and social meanings into the broader culture' (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 466). Coser is among those who have pointed to the obstinate and provocative independence of intellectuals, often displayed in a refusal to embrace conformity or constancy: 'They are those who "think otherwise" ... not only puzzling but upsetting to the run of ordinary citizens' (1965: x). And Said has offered a broad overview which might usefully serve as a working definition, and which is made all the more useful by its rejection of the tendency to link intellectual work with rigid hierarchies of knowledge – science, politics, religion, literature, and so on: 'The intellectual is an individual endowed with a facility for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public' (1994: 9).

I hope to show that the significance of popular music may be approached in the context of these (interrelated) conditions – resistance, effect, position, independence, articulation – and that it is not inappropriate to consider the Beatles as successful exemplars of such abilities. Not all popular music can lend itself – or would wish to – to such an analysis. But the analysis is not inherently misplaced, and if popular music is to be taken seriously, as a creative form and as a subject for academic inspection, investigations of this nature are not only justified, but desirable.

THE BEATLES, POPULAR MUSIC, AND THE 1960s

> People tend to listen to the Beatles the way families in the last century listened to readings of Dickens, and it might be remembered by literary snobs that the novel then, like the Beatles and even film now, was considered a popular form of entertainment generally beneath serious criticism, and most certainly beneath academic attention. (Poirier 1969: 162)
>
> John Lennon: And the thing about rock and roll, good rock and roll ... is that it's real ... you recognize something in it which is true, like all true art. (Wenner 1971: 101)

There still persists in popular music today a reticence to engage in comparative evaluations of individual songs, performers or genres. Other than to employ a broad, ill-defined distinction between 'rock' and 'pop' which promotes the former as possessing qualities of 'creativity', 'authenticity' and 'distinctiveness', and the latter as 'commercial', 'contrived' and 'predictable', there is no consensually agreed set of criteria which usefully and consistently allows for objective judgements of quality. A principal explanation for this lies in the historical experience of rock and roll itself; through the 1950s and into the early 1960s it was uniformly dismissed as trite, unimportant and inferior by musicologists who saw in it no lasting value or musical significance. Five decades on, having refuted the claims of those who forecast its early disappearance, there is thus an unwillingness within popular music to be seen to be making similar and categorical value judgements about the advantages or shortcomings of specific musics. (It must be said that the industry's own preoccupation with quantity – sales and the charts – is both a consequence and cause of its retreat from the question of quality).

However, by the mid-1960s, it had become impossible to maintain that such music was merely a temporary aberration. The recasting of Elvis Presley from demonic rocker to family movie star (and, in the UK, a similar, though less marked, transition in the career of Cliff Richard); the emergence of Tamla Motown as the first internationally successful Black-owned record label; the impact of Bob Dylan and the development of the 'protest' song; the British Invasion, led by the Beatles, which repositioned the sites of power in the global record industry; the central role assigned to popular music within the first stirrings of a student movement and counter-culture: all led, in differing ways, to a recognition that popular music could and should be taken seriously – as industry, as entertainment, and as art.

Above all, this recognition embodied a perception of popular music as a lasting creative form which possessed its own aesthetic, its own structures and cultures, and which had the ability to generate its own and others' ideas; it has been characterized at this period as a form 'pregnant with ideas and innovations' (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 452). Among its most significant outcomes was the publication in 1967 of *Rolling Stone*, the first music paper to endeavour to exceed the limitations of the fan magazine and the traditional pop weekly; it described itself as 'sort of a magazine and sort of a newspaper ... a new publication reflecting what we see are the changes in rock and roll and the changes related to rock and roll ... *Rolling Stone* is not just about music, but also about the things and attitudes that the music embraces' (Frith 1978: 144).

Related shifts in the cultural re-arrangement of popular music in the 1960s have been noted by, among others, Chambers. Its typical consumers expanded from 'working class teenagers ... feeding garish juke-boxes' to include the 'recently enfranchized grammar school, student and "hip" middle class audience'. Its sites of consumption were no longer just the coffee-bars, but 'fashionable urban residences ... [and] late night on BBC-2'. Its social and cultural context had been transposed from the 'nonconformity previously associated with the twilight world of beats and jazz' into 'the "radical chic" of a "thinking" person's music' (1985: 84).

The ability of agents of popular culture to undermine the monopoly of legitimate sources of knowledge and its transmission, and the communities which sustained them, to which I referred earlier, was aided in the UK by the rapid and irresistible rise of television, which offered an alternative source of information and explanation and promoted new forms of entertainment. In 1950, 6 per cent of households held a television licence; by 1965, this had risen to more than 90 per cent. ITV began transmissions in 1955 to break the monopoly of BBC; an additional channel, BBC 2, was introduced in 1964. Pulled in opposing directions by the legacy of the Reithian ethic of public service broadcasting and the audience demands of commercial broadcasting, British television evolved, *inter alia*, a style of reportage and presentation which came to occupy the terrain lying between the celebrity chat show and the panel of experts. (The archetypal example of such a programme was *What's My Line?*, in which a quartet of guests drawn from show business, public life and the arts would attempt, through astute questioning and reasoning, to discover a person's occupation).

Blurring news and entertainment, and utilizing documentary and interview styles, television (and the press) provided the perfect public platform from which those with something important to say, or those whom television believed would be appealing to viewers, could communicate with huge and widely dispersed (socially and geographically) audiences. In the mid-1960s, at the height of what has been depicted as a extraordinary period of revolution in Britain and the Western world, this relatively small, established community of experts, celebrities and commentators was expanded to accommodate the more articulate and attractive representatives from the new world of pop. 'Scarcely a day went by without news of the opening of a new boutique, without a feature on Terence Stamp or Michael Caine or Carnaby Street, without a picture of Jean Shrimpton or a mention of Mick Jagger or decorating tips from David Hicks' (Booker 1969: 275). In sociological terms, this can be seen as a contemporary illustration of the movement from exclusion to assimilation within the Parsonian process of social acceptance.

As the undoubted principals in the cast of the 'Swinging Sixties', the Beatles shared with television a position of reciprocal gain. The group, like others, relied on the national and global exposure which television could provide; television welcomed the guaranteed audiences that accompanied each of their appearances. In a development not witnessed in the entertainment industry before, the nature of these appearances gradually changed, from singing (or miming) their hit songs to participating in interviews and discussions in which they offered opinions, interpretations, guidance, on events and issues often unrelated to the traditional concerns of the pop star – the war in Vietnam, the decriminalisation of marijuana, creativity and control within popular music, the possibilities of religious exploration, and so on. This transition was to become increasingly evident as the decade progressed. From October 1962 to April 1970, the group (individually or collectively) made more than 120 television broadcasts (excluding news coverage and the screening of their promotional films/videos) in the UK alone, during which time the proportion of those in which the primary content was musical rather than discoursive reduced significantly (Lewisohn 1992: 355). In 1962 and 1963, they made 42 appearances, of which 32 (76 per cent) were mainly musical; in 1964 and 1965, the group appeared 47 times on television, of which 19 (40 per cent) were mainly musical; between 1966 and 1970, their 35 television appearences included six (17 per cent) that were mainly musical.

What replaced the musical emphasis was an emphasis on the Beatles as men of ideas. At different times they were allocated and fulfilled each of the varied roles of the secular scholar outlined by Znaniecki in his analysis of the social circulation of knowledge. *The discoverer of truth* is the person who comes across new truths, hitherto unknown, and is hailed as such by a group of followers. *The systematizer* is characterized by the certainty and completeness of the knowledge he or she possesses, when compared to that from other sources. *The contributor* corrects mistakes, rectifies omissions and contributes at least one or two major accomplishments in a singular field. *The fighter for truth* defends his or her own, and others', explanations and theories, often engaging in particular campaigns. *The eclectic* is not confined to one school or philosophy alone, although he or she may eventually develop a distinctive personal domain. *The disseminator of knowledge* develops, expands and institutionalizes his or her knowledge to an unprecedented degree (1940: 117–50).

The similarities between Znaniecki's descriptions of a particular kind of intellectual and the qualities attributed to the Beatles (and other of their peers) are striking. Moreover, it should not be supposed that the role of intellectuals is somehow diluted by their contact with the contemporary mass media. Responding to the criticism that the media undermine the maintenance of intellectual traditions by the temptations of easy fame and fortune which they offer, Shils insists that this is not automatically the case: '[T]here is no reason to conclude that they affect those with strong motivation or outstanding literary or artistic talent' (1972: 85).

This assertion is reinforced by a consideration of one aspect of the group's musical output throughout the 1960s. The archetypal pop song has always been, and continues to be today, the love song – the lament for lost or unrequited love, the celebration of mutual and/or genuine love, and the comment about the nature and significance of love. However, the Beatles' ability and determination to go beyond conventional estimations of commercial viability, while remaining within the mass medium of records, is seen in the way that their lyrical concerns gradually shifted. Of the 76 self-compositions (typically Lennon–McCartney or Harrison) recorded between 1962 and 1965, 74 (97 per cent) were love songs; of the 120 self-compositions recorded between 1966 and 1970, 38 (32 per cent) were love songs (Inglis 1997). In place of love, their new themes explored alienation and estrangement ('A Day In The Life'), rebirth ('Here Comes The Sun'), escape and solitude ('Fool On The Hill'), political involvement

('Revolution'), nostalgia and regret ('You Never Give Me Your Money'), greed ('Piggies'), the effects of drugs ('Tomorrow Never Knows'), interpretations of childhood ('Penny Lane'), divisions within the counter-culture ('Come Together'), the boredom of excess ('Good Morning, Good Morning'). In so doing, the Beatles were in effect realizing their ability 'to make larger artistic statements within the pop format' (Hertsgaard 1995: 301).

Similarly, the conduct of the group's press conferences through the decade posed a disruption to the established conventions of knock-about question-and-answer sessions in favour of longer, more complex interviews in which beliefs and advice were sought. Two extracts will suffice to demonstrate this. The first is from a group press conference in August 1964 in New York.

Q: Do you like fish and chips?
Ringo: Yes, but I like steak and chips better.
Q: How tall are you?
Ringo: Two feet, nine inches.
Q: Paul, what do you think of columnist Walter Winchell?
Paul: He said I'm married and I'm not.
George: Maybe he wants to marry you!
Q: How did you find America?
Ringo: We went to Greenland and made a left turn.
Q: Is it true you can't sing?
John: (*points to George*) Not me. Him.
(Giuliano and Giuliano 1995: 27)

The second is from John Lennon's press conference at the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel in March 1969, during his honeymoon with Yoko Ono.

Q: Some people are equal, but some are more equal than others, as you know.
John: Yes. But they all have equal possibility.
Q: Is Holland a honeymoon country?
John: It's a beautiful place. Amsterdam's a place where a lot of things are happening with the youth. It's an important place.
Q: Are those ideas that appeal to you?
John: Yes, the peaceful ideas that the youth have. If we have any influence on youth at all, we'd like to influence them in a peaceful way.
Q: What do you see in a conformist institution such as marriage?

John: Intellectually, we know marriage is nowhere: that a man should just say 'Here, you're married', when we've been living together a year before it. Romantically and emotionally, it's something else. (Ibid. 1995: 118–19)

Taken by themselves, the above examples might be explained by the duration of the Beatles' success; even for the popular media, there is a point at which enquiries about diet and height cease to be appropriate. But there are numerous additional factors which would support a contention that during the 1960s the affiliation between popular music, its leading performers, and 'the arts' began to stray outside the parameters erected and maintained by what has been described as 'the dialectical antagonism that surely governs the relationship between the intellectual and the popular' (Ross 1989: 227).

An early example was the reaction of the literary establishment to the publication of John Lennon's two books of verses, essays and drawings. *In His Own Write* (1964) was endorsed by *The Times Literary Supplement* as 'worth the attention of anyone who fears for the impoverishment of the English language and the British imagination' (Coleman 1984: 195), was honoured by a Foyle's Literary Luncheon at London's Dorchester Hotel, and was later adapted for the stage and performed at the National Theatre. *A Spaniard In The Works* (1965) was said in *New Republic* to have 'at one stroke, put the young non-reader in touch with a central strand in the literary tradition of the last thirty years in every English-speaking country' (Thomson and Gutman 1987: 61); interviewed by literary critic Wilfred De'Ath on the BBC radio programme *World Of Books*, Lennon revealed that his major influences included Arthur Conan Doyle and Lewis Carroll.

Parallel to Lennon's acceptance by intellectual circles in Britain was Paul McCartney's unashamed enthusiasm for contact with other art forms outside rock and roll. 'Paul was very much the bon vivant and man about town. He was trying to do a crash course in culture ... It was Paul who was actually hanging out with London's avant-garde crowd ... Paul met everybody who was anybody in the creative world' (Flippo 1988: 212–14). Explaining his increasing immersion and involvement in the worlds of the theatre, literature, art and classical music, and the new companions with whom he was exchanging ideas (Bertrand Russell, Harold Pinter, Kenneth Tynan, Arnold Wesker) McCartney insisted: 'I don't want to sound like Jonathan Miller going on, but I'm trying to cram everything in, all the things I've missed. People are saying things and painting things and composing things

that are great, and I must know what people are doing' (Salewicz 1986: 154).

This appetite for knowledge, translated into 'a truly fierce drive to make sense of the world' (Mills 1959: 233) was repeatedly seen in other areas of the group's activities, too. Of their experiences in 1967–8 of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's doctrine of transcendental meditation, Ringo Starr explained: 'We have got almost anything money can buy. But when you can do that, the things you buy mean nothing after a time. You look for something else ... we have found something now which fills the gap' (Giuliano and Giuliano 1995: 86). John Lennon expressed the motivation behind his political collaborations with figures such as Michael X, Tariq Ali and Jerry Rubin in 1970 by stating: 'I think we must make the workers aware of the really unhappy position they are in, break the dream they are surrounded by. They're dreaming someone else's dream, it's not even their own' (Coleman 1984: 363). And George Harrison's rejection of the preeminence of the Beatles was emphasized by his comments in 1968: 'All that sort of Beatle thing is trivial and unimportant. I'm fed up with all this me, us, I, stuff and all the meaningless things we do. I'm trying to work out solutions to the more important things in life' (Davies 1968: 339).

The commitment revealed by the Beatles to their role not merely as consumers of ideas, but as facilitators of the circulation of ideas was formalized with the establishment of Zapple, a sub-division of Apple, the management and recording company formed by the group in 1968. Operating as a new, specialist record label, Zapple was intended to grow into a commercial outlet for the spoken word. Recordings of discussions, conversations and readings with Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Henry Miller, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, William Burroughs, Charles Bukowski and others were planned, and, in some cases, completed and released. Invitations were also extended to Mao Tse-Tung, Indira Gandhi and Fidel Castro. Zapple's initial press release, in February 1969, announced:

> Discussions are now in progress with several world figures, as well as leaders in the various arts and sciences to record their works and thoughts for the label ... It is the hope of Apple Corps Ltd that the new label will help pioneer a new area for the recording industry equivalent to what the paperback revolution did to book publishing. (Miles 1997: 475)

While such forays into the worlds of politics, philosophy and religion do not perforce make an intellectual, they do connect with, and illustrate the validity of Znaniecki's reflections on personal intellectual development, wherein he suggests that the essence of true knowledge is the 'conviction that man, the individual man ... can ... discover the ultimate nature of the world and his own nature' (1940: 161).

The group's comments and behaviours, amplified by an attendant mass media, unexpected because of their origin, and contrasted against a contemporary background in which it was widely supposed that 'an intellectual generation ... simply never appeared' (Jacoby 1987: 3), gained a currency which in other times and other circumstances might not have been theirs. Almost by default, the Beatles (and some of their peers) were elected to act as spokespersons for a generation, to define and guide a global counter-culture, to distinguish the valuable from the worthless, to offer new insights and philosophies, to transform the world – to assume the mantle of (surrogate) intellectuals.

Ironically, they may well have been aided in these obligations by the essential fact (identified by all of their biographers) of their irreverence and sense of humour. Mills has noted the importance of 'a playfulness of mind' (1959: 233); and Said has argued that one of the requirements of intellectuals 'involves a sense of the dramatic and of the insurgent ... catching the audience's attention, being better at wit and debate than one's opponents' (1994: xv). Nowhere were these capacities better displayed than in the note which accompanied John Lennon's return of his MBE (awarded in 1965) to Buckingham Palace in November 1969:

> Your Majesty: I am returning this MBE in protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria–Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam, and against 'Cold Turkey' slipping down the charts. With love, John Lennon of Bag. (Coleman 1984: 324)

Commenting on public bewilderment at his return of the MBE, his bed-ins in Amsterdam and Montreal in 1969, and his appearance (with Yoko Ono) concealed inside a large white bag during the Underground Arts Movement's 'Alchemical Wedding' Christmas party at London's Royal Albert Hall in 1968, Lennon demonstrated his awareness of the necessity to combine political argument with the manipulation of the media: 'Henry Ford knew how to sell cars by advertising. I'm selling peace at whatever the cost. Yoko and I are just one big advertising campaign' (Connolly 1981: 121).

Unpredictability, irresponsibility, flippancy which, if taken to extremes, may lead to marginality, also serve to illustrate an important historical connection, which in the case of the Beatles, appears particularly apt. 'Among the intellectuals' ancestors we may also reckon the medieval court jester. *The role of the jester ... was to play none of the expected roles*' (Coser 1965: viii–ix; emphasis added). The disjunction between the expected role of the 'pop star' and the increasingly diverse and innovative roles assumed by the Beatles – musical, social, political, professional – became one of the most striking components of their career. The fact that many of their actions were inconsistent, uncertain, unsuccessful and (in retrospect) ill-advised, does not detract from the status of the ideas from which they derived. '[I]t should not surprise us that our age has been characterized as one of conversion. Nor should it be surprising that intellectuals especially have been prone to change their world views radically and with amazing frequency' (Berger 1963: 63).

However one seeks to approach and evaluate the significance of the Beatles, the extent to which the debates provoked by their career can be meaningfully investigated relies on a constant awareness of the principal fact that they are musicians. To state this is not to devalue their other (subsequent) roles, but to recognize that their work, its point of origin, and its impetus were primarily musical. Whatever its nature – literature, painting, poetry, music – 'nothing is as important to the intellectual as the work he creates. Through this work, he affirms his calling, and his creation strengthens his identity' (Coser 1965: 326).

That the Beatles' music was, and continues to be, widely regarded as (among) the best of its kind and time is self-evident, as its critical respect and commercial success suggest. However, these are merely the public manifestations of artistic fortune; the personal certainty of satisfaction is the criterion which guides the intellectual. The craft of composition and the release of the imagination may be the sole activities through which creative performers are able to reassure themselves that their work – and thus, they – possess intrinsic value. This is especially true within the working practices of the entertainment industry, where the over-riding emphasis tends to be on instant gratification, winning formulae and predictable outcomes. Popular music is often seen as exhibiting the most acute embodiment of these concerns, operating as it does within boundaries created by the relatively inflexible demands of airplay requirements, the existence of the charts, assumptions about appropriate subject matter and suitable lyrical content, and, more recently, music video formats.

The ability to confront and overcome these limitations is rare indeed, which is why so many popular musicians have chosen to distance themselves from segments of their work, by invoking a professional cynicism about its merits. While such repositioning is certainly present in some of the Beatles' reflections on their music, there is a much deeper, and more consistent, appraisal of their own work which points to a satisfaction with the way in which it substantiates the identification and justification of themselves as creative musicians. John Lennon's assessment of the group's musical abilities provides one confirmation of this: 'I think Paul and Ringo stand up anywhere with *any* of the rock musicians. Not technically great. None of us were technical musicians. None of us could read music. None of us can write it. But as pure musicians, as inspired humans to make noise, they're as good as anybody!' (Sheff and Golson 1981: 142). Similar sentiments about the group's capacity as composers have been articulated by Paul McCartney: 'People always say to me "Do you think you and John were great?" I say "We were fantastic." It would be kind of stupid to say we're no good' (Coleman 1995: 61).

Equally significant was the ability of the Beatles to engage in musical innovation and departure without seeming to undermine their earlier outputs. So, for example, Lennon defined 'In My Life' (1965) as his first major piece of work, suggesting that from that time 'the *depth* of the Beatles' songwriting ... was more pronounced; it had a more mature, more intellectual – whatever you want to call it – approach' (Sheff and Golson 1981: 121). Yet at the same time, McCartney has found much to be proud of in the group's first single 'Love Me Do' (1962): '[That] was our greatest philosophical song: "Love me do/You know I love you/I'll always be true/So love me do/Please love me do". For it to be simple, and true, means that it's incredibly simple' (Miles 1978: 79).

McCartney's (and the group's) endorsement of a language which is direct and a presentation which is unambiguous have been seen in part to draw on some of the narrative simplicities of the traditional folk song. 'Maybe the most important service of the Beatles and similar groups is the restoration to good standing of the simplicities that have frightened us into irony and the search for irony; they locate the beauty and pathos of commonplace feelings even while they work havoc with fashionable or tiresome expressions of those feelings' (Poirier 1969: 167). In addition, the enunciation of the simplicity of clear statement reveals one of the principles through which intellectual activity and the communication of ideas come to be stimulated.

'The "creative" act, of any artist, is in any case the process of making a meaning active, by communicating an organised experience to others' (Williams 1961: 49).

This last point deserves clarification. Like the creative artist, the intellectual too requires a community within which he or she is to function, and within which the intellectual vocation is possible. These requirements are discussed in Coser's assessment of the place of intellectuals within contemporary mass culture:

> First, intellectuals need an audience, a circle of people to whom they can express themselves and who can bestow recognition [...] Second, intellectuals require regular contact with their fellow intellectuals, for only through such communication can they evolve common standards of method and excellence, common norms to guide their conduct. (1965: 3)

If 'intellectuals' is replaced by 'popular musicians' in the above passage, and applied to the history of the Beatles, the analysis is not diminished, but gains from the inclusion of a singular and pertinent example.

This overall sense of a distinct, dynamic and diversified community in which the Beatles were active and influential has prompted a comparison with the *jongleurs* or 'wandering minstrels' of the Middle Ages, the itinerant poet-musicians who used their musicianship to fulfil a multiplicity of roles – entertainer, critic, chronicler, commentator – and who were simultaneously courted and distrusted by those who aspired to be their patrons. In some ways the comparison may not be valid; technological, geographical and political conditions and opportunities scarcely existed in the way they do today. But in the context of the communication of ideas and the generation of new knowledges that typically contest the privileged existence of older, more established ones, and the public adoption of the adversarial positions they often imply, the cultural and musical history of the 1960s does support such a comparison. 'Who would have thought that the pop music of the 1960s would develop into a force as vital as that of the jongleur of old?' (Peyser 1969: 127).

CONCLUSION

> Leonard Bernstein: Three bars of 'A Day In The Life' still sustain me, rejuvenate me, inflame my senses and sensibilities. (Stokes 1980: ii)

Abbie Hoffman: There was a cultural revolution where the best and the popular were identical. And that is a very rare occurrence in history. The effect of something like *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* ... on me and other activists, organisers and counter-culture people around the world was one of incredible impact. (Giuliano and Giuliano 1995: 261)

Wilfrid Mellers: Through their music they rendered articulate a generation. (Mellers 1973: 188)

The history of mass communications, from the introduction to Britain of William Caxton's printing press in the late fifteenth century to the proliferation around the world of Bill Gates's Microsoft programs in the late twentieth century, has always been dependent on the interplay between two separate but crucially related variables – an audience and a technology. One without the other is redundant. Whatever the size of the population, it only becomes an audience when it has access to a common technology; whatever the specifications of the technology, it only evolves into a system of communication when it has located and contacted an audience.

Not until the 1950s did the technologies of the record player, the transistor radio and the jukebox coincide with the emergence of a new audience, composed of large numbers of young, relatively affluent men and women, who became known as teenagers. The resulting (often inexact) correspondence of supply and demand was able to exploit the convergence of several musical strands – gospel, blues, ballads, folksong (including country) and jazz – which had begun in the 1940s, and which had given rise to a new form of contemporary popular music, called rock and roll. Of course, the simultaneous existence of an audience and a technology does not *per se* guarantee anything other than the possibility of new forms of cultural activity; that the activities surrounding rock and roll were so successful was contingent on a number of other factors, including economic, legal and demographic circumstances. Significantly, it has also been recognized that like cultural activity, intellectual life too depends not only on an audience but on institutions of communication through which its works can be assessed, selected and disseminated. To the extent that there is a common identification between the preconditions for the activation of popular culture (including popular music) and the transactions of intellectual life, it is therefore plausible to continue to think of the two as related, both theoretically and substantively.

These remarks should not be seen to imply that for the Beatles (and others) the pop song became a manifesto carrying a stream of messages, insights and announcements from teacher to pupils. John Lennon's explicit denial of this – 'Forget about the teacher. If the Beatles had a message, it was that. With the Beatles, the music is the point' (Sheff and Golson 1981: 108) – is not, however, so much a rejection of the argument that songs (as texts) possess meanings and can convey messages, but a frank admission that their precise nature is unknown, even to the musician. One is reminded of the observation attributed to Alfred Stieglitz: 'You will discover ... that if the artist could explain in words what he has made, he would not have had to create it' (Norman 1960: 10). Notwithstanding these reservations, there remains much in the music and career of the Beatles that lends itself to a re-evaluation in terms of the social role of the man of knowledge.

One striking, and relevant, example of the association between the popular and the intellectual is provided by considering the condition of Britain in the 1950s, and in particular its intellectual life, which in the early years of the decade was marked by an 'extraordinary state of self-satisfaction' (Shils 1972: 139), and protected and prolonged by the existence of strict social and geographical bounds around what continued to be an exclusive, if pluralistic, community. Yet, by mid-decade, 'out of this comparative placidity, Britain suddenly entered on a period of upheaval ... above all, a new spirit was unleashed – a new wind of essentially youthful hostility to every kind of established convention and traditional authority, a wind of moral freedom and rebellion' (Booker 1969: 32–3). This upheaval centred primarily around a recalibration of the distance between the popular and the intellectual within the world of ideas, as some examples from that world may help to indicate.

In September 1955, *Waiting For Godot*, written by Samuel Beckett and directed by Peter Hall, opened at the Arts Theatre in London, followed in 1956 by John Osborne's *Look Back In Anger* at the Royal Court Theatre, and Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow* at Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop. Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* (1956) and John Braine's *Room At The Top* (1957) were among the decade's first novels by new authors. The Institute Of Contemporary Arts' 'This Is Tomorrow' exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956 introduced pop art to Britain. The Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament held its first Aldermaston march over Easter in 1958. By 1955, the most popular programme on

radio was the comedy series *The Goon Show*, first broadcast in 1952. For many, the definitive exposition of the energies contained in these and other events was achieved in the publication in 1957 of *Declaration*, a collection of essays whose introduction referred to 'indignation against the apathy, the complacency, the idealistic bankruptcy of their environment' felt by 'a number of young and widely opposed writers [who] have burst upon the scene and are striving to change many of the values which have held good in recent years' (Maschler 1957: 3).

While it is important not to romanticize or exaggerate the significance of examples like these, it is equally important not to overlook them. Individually, they may offer instances of the fresh perspectives referred to earlier; *Look Back In Anger* has, for example, been defined as the play which 'announced a new kind of attitude, a new kind of drama, even a new kind of actor' (Levin 1970: 251). Taken together, their proximity is not coincidental, but indicative of a general resurgence of independent artistic and intellectual activity from those formerly excluded from such a community:

> one of the most impressive facts about modern life is that in it, unlike preceding cultures, intellectual activity is not carried on exclusively by a socially rigidly defined class ... but rather by a social stratum which is to a large degree unattached to any social class and which is recruited from an increasingly inclusive area of social life. (Mannheim 1960: 139)

Placed in conjunction with simultaneous developments, such as the rapid growth of television, the increasing availability of contraception, the emergence of the affluent society, the abolition of conscription, they contextualize the period in which the promises embedded in American rock and roll had introduced alternatives, in leisure and work, into the lives of many aspiring young British musicians, such as the Beatles. And overall, they illustrate the initiation of a process which in effect dismantled many of the barriers between the intellectual and popular culture. Popular culture itself became a recognized subject for intellectual investigation and comment; and the approved environs of intellectuals expanded from bourgeois literary, artistic and academic precincts to encompass large sections of the mass culture industries. Moreover, these tendencies developed an impetus of their own which quickly led to an exponential rate of growth in the quantity, range and content of the works produced. The novelist Doris Lessing has written that 'when a hitherto inarticulate class is

released into speech, it brings a fresh rush of vitality into literature' (1957: 22); in the years that followed, cinema, theatre, broadcasting and music were to reap similar benefits from the democratisation of admission to and membership of such circles.

There is a great temptation to seek to establish an unbreakable connection between the Beatles and the events and developments of the 1960s; understandably so, since the group's musical successes did occur in those years. But, in addition to imposing analytical constraints, this tendency has also, on occasion, been responsible for a reification of the decade, through which it is endowed with spiritual, material, even spatial qualities. Such analyses are not wholly untenable, but certainly incomplete. The Beatles and their peers in the 1960s were not the *inventors* but the *inheritors* of the possibilities first mooted in the 1950s, as they themselves were growing from schoolboys into young adults. John Lennon has been quick to acknowledge this: 'Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles too. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of the ship. But the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest shouting "Land Ho!" ... but we were all in the same damn boat' (Sheff and Golson 1981: 78). His insight is remarkably similar to Mannheim's observation, made some fifty years earlier, that the particular position enjoyed by intellectuals may permit them to accomplish individually things of very much wider significance: 'Thus they might play the part of watchmen in what would otherwise be a pitch-black night' (1960: 143). Inasmuch as the achievements of the Beatles illuminated and enlightened so many paths followed by so many people, his comment might well stand as an apt metaphor with which to finally evaluate the importance of their work.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PETE BEST: HISTORY AND HIS STORY

INTRODUCTION

> ***Paul McCartney:*** You know, I was talking to Neil Aspinall at Ringo's wedding, and we were remembering something that had happened years ago and he said, "Oh, I remember it exactly, it was in Piccadilly Circus, wasn't it?" I said, "No, it was Savile Row." *We had exactly the same story but the background had somehow changed.* (Giuliano and Giuliano 1995: p. 136; emphasis added)
>
> ***George Martin:*** A few years ago, I was up at AIR Studios with Paul, and we were reminiscing. . . . Suddenly, we found ourselves disagreeing over a silly little detail. I said that George had done something. "No, it was Ringo," said Paul. We were both so sure of ourselves. Then we fell about laughing. "My God!" I exclaimed, *"if we can't get it right, who the hell can?"* (Martin, 1994: p. xi; emphasis added)
>
> ***Hunter Davies:*** Mal [Evans] used to say that the word Sergeant Pepper came from him, his overheard mistake for Salt and Pepper.
>
> Neil [Aspinall] tells me he was the first to suggest to Paul that the whole album should be in the form of Sergeant Pepper's actual show, and that Paul jumped at the idea. *Who can tell now?* (Davies, 1985: pp. 57–58; emphasis added)

In their own ways, the preceding examples point directly to problems inevitably encountered in the course of all historical investigation: the unreliability of memory, the partiality of authors, the status of facts. Writing more than a hundred years ago, John Baker Hopkins offered the advice that "in history, only names and dates are trustworthy, and the former are frequently corrupted and the latter are frequently wrong" (Chancellor, 1970: p. 10). Even when such mistakes are avoided or corrected, it remains notoriously difficult to approach any historical accounts with confidence. "Every perception is a construction; the simplest observation is already a theory. Facts are never neutral; they are impregnated with value judgements" (Gay, 1975: p. 195).

The positions and strategies adopted by historians in response to these observations may well be familiar; some will be referred to in what follows. But, rather than simply repeat established debates at a

theoretical level, I hope to illuminate the ideas they embody by referencing them to a specific and significant event in the recent history of popular music—the departure of Pete Best from the Beatles—which has been investigated repeatedly and explained through the use of a number of concepts whose orientation (if not terminology) draws directly from social psychology. At the same time, an awareness of those debates might help in the discovery of an appropriate orientation from which to approach this particular incident.

It is important to emphasize that my purpose is not to search for the "solution" or "truth" about Best's dismissal from the group, or, as C. Wright Mills memorably described it, to "try to freeze some knife-edge moment" (1959: p. 168) in order to open it up for inspection. It is rather to indicate the extent to which theories of group processes and intergroup relations might persuade contemporary and future audiences to hold widely differing perceptions of a significant event in the history of the group described as "the most important single element in British popular culture of the postwar years" (Evans, 1984: p. 7).

Today's commentaries become tomorrow's facts—facts that may be construed in different ways, may be regarded with suspicion, may be open to revision, but facts nonetheless. The seemingly inexhaustible worldwide interest in and curiosity about the Beatles and their lives suggests that they will continue to be victims of a propensity to attract "myths and rumours, multiplying stronger than ever, around [their] scarcely imaginable, true story" (Norman, 1981: p. xvi). This tendency has been compounded by a wider historical impulse defined as "the inability to deal with the past other than as a conflict of good guys and bad" (Handlin, 1979: p. 339).

The consequences of these inclinations have been noted by Paul McCartney: "People are printing *facts* about me and John. They're *not* facts. But it will go down in the records. It will become part of history. It will be there for always. People will believe it all" (Davies, 1985: p. 473).

The continued circulation and reproduction of so many myths about the Beatles is neither accidental nor innocent. At a period in our history when, in general terms, nostalgia has become a central component of the culture industry, the ability to re-enter the past and engage its leading figures and events demands the existence of some relatively accessible guides to what is often difficult terrain. These myths provide such a guide and, in doing so, perform important social functions. But, as Lerner warned, the past may cease to be attractive if "we tarnish it with verifiable fact" (1972: p. 246). Thus, the history of the Beatles requires not so much an excavation of the "truth" (or truths) about Pete Best's departure as a plausible account of its significant events. Nevertheless, such accounts themselves possess their own histories, and it is to the construction and articulation of these that I will turn now.

HISTORY, TRUTH, AND REALITY

Presented as narrative, the events surrounding Pete Best and the Beatles are not in dispute. Invited to become the Beatles' drummer in August of 1960, he left the Blackjacks to join John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Stuart Sutcliffe on their first visit to Hamburg. He stayed with the group for two years, a period that saw them fulfill three separate and lengthy residencies in Hamburg, more than 200 appearances at The Cavern in Liverpool, the appointment of Brian Epstein as their manager, the death of Stuart Sutcliffe, an unsuccessful studio audition for Decca, and a successful audition and provisional recording contract with Parlophone.

In August of 1962, just two months before the release in Britain of "Love Me Do," Brian Epstein told Best that rest of the group wanted to replace him with Ringo Starr (from Rory Storm and the Hurricanes). Within 18 months of his departure, the Beatles had become the most successful and celebrated force in international popular music—a position they are widely acknowledged to have retained to this day.

Objectively written, past events like these are part of the "very large body of agreed historical knowledge on which no dispute is possible" (Elton, 1969: p. 80). But history is more than merely what is past; "the business of the historian is to make sense of the past" (Plumb, 1969: p. 134). And it is within the attempt to make sense that the potential for uncertainty lies.

Historians like Carr have argued that, in this respect, we should jettison any faith in the absolute autonomy of history. "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy" (Carr, 1961: p. 12). Carr's judgment is based on three inescapable characteristics of historiographic practice: the necessity for selection and interpretation; the need for some sort of contact or imaginative understanding with those about whom the historian is writing; and the fact that the historian resides not in the past but in the present, and is therefore subject to its conditions and constraints. But in making these points, Carr is not criticizing historians or diminishing their work; indeed, he sees the interpretation they bring to their studies as "the life-blood of history" (1961: p. 28), adding: "The historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless" (1961: p. 30).

Carr's may be regarded as theoretical points, but more pragmatic support of the same stance has been provided by Tosh in his critical analysis of the sources from which much of what passes as historical knowledge derives. First,

such sources are incomplete, either because they have been lost or because they were never properly established. Second, they may be tainted, either through deliberate distortion or by contemporary assumptions about what is worth retaining. Third, there is sometimes a formidable profusion of sources, which can lead to confusion over issues of selection. Tosh's conclusion, too, is that "however rigorously professional the approach, there will always be a plurality of interpretation" (1984: p. 125).

In his reflections on the analysis of culture, Williams argued that these concerns combine, in practice, to create a "selective tradition," whose operation, beginning within the period itself, nominates certain activities and documents for emphasis. These become subject to our interpretations and evaluations, which are themselves likely to fluctuate over time. "A selective process of a quite drastic kind is at once evident. . . . We see this clearly enough in the case of past periods, but we never really believe it about our own" (Williams, 1961: pp. 66–67).

These and many other contributions suggest, therefore, that history—including recent and contemporary history—can be nothing more than argument, and that the circumstances of the past are literally unknowable. However, there are those who affirm that history does have a truth, albeit one that may be elusive. Principal among these is Elton, whose views "have long set the agenda for much if not all of the crucially important preliminary thinking about the question of what is history" (Jenkins, 1995: p. 3). Elton's argument is that—notwithstanding the prejudices, the oversights, the distortions (whether deliberate or unwitting) a historian may bring to his or her assessment of past events—past events remain events which did undoubtedly occur in reality, and which are theoretically capable of investigation and comprehension.

> Thus while history is rarely able to say: this is the truth and no other answer is possible; it will always be able to say: this once existed or took place, and there is therefore a truth to be discovered if only we can find it. (Elton, 1969: p. 74)

Elton's belief that historical truths are open to discovery is promoted with even greater conviction by others: "The historian's vocation depends on this minimal operational article of faith: Truth is absolute; it is as absolute as the world is real. Truth is knowable and will out if earnestly pursued" (Handlin, 1979: p. 405).

Handlin's defense of the reality of the world is, of course, the point at which many contemporary scholars veer away from traditional parameters of debate. Dismissing both Elton's and Carr's contributions as outdated and inad-

equate, Jenkins invited us to "think of 'the past as such' as being an absent object of inquiry, its presence . . . being signified by its remaining traces, which is the only 'real past' we have" (1995: p. 17). In addition, these remaining traces—the records and archives that historians use—are themselves "highly volatile and mutable products of complex historical processes" (Jenkins, 1995: p. 17). While some kinds of "facts" may be established, the backgrounds to those facts and the contexts within which they became significant and meaningful can never be located. Therefore, "any such 'context' which is constructed to contextualise the facts has to be ultimately imagined or invented . . . all interpretations of the past are indeed as much invented . . . as found" (Jenkins, 1995: p. 19).

PETE BEST AND THE BEATLES

Interpretation, imagination, and invention are presented as unavoidable traits of historiographic practice. Their impact on the ways in which past events are re-presented and subsequently comprehended can now be illustrated by concentrating on the story of Pete Best and the Beatles, the event of Best's departure from the group, and the interpersonal and intergroup contexts within which the event has been made accountable.

At this point, it is appropriate to reflect on the fact that, during the two years Best was with the Beatles, the four young men (five, until Stuart Sutcliffe's departure) were not just an occupational (musical) group but also an informal (social) group. An estimation of this is important, as it helps to indicate the extent to which Best was a group member rather than a mere auxiliary.

> To categorise a series of individuals as being a group or not being a group is an oversimplification. The fact is that a series of individuals can vary to the extent that they constitute a group. To put it another way, some groups have more togetherness, are more unified or "groupy" than others. (Wilson, 1978: pp. 25–26)

The key to assessing the presence of this togetherness is determining the degree of interdependence among members—the extent to which "the behavior of one member influences or affects that of others and vice versa" (Wilson, 1978: p. 26). Wilson asserted that six dimensions or elements of group life must be present before a collection of individuals can properly be called a *group*.

Interaction is the process of mutual communication between individuals.

Norms are consensually agreed-upon behavioral expectations.

A *status structure* refers to behavioral expectations about certain individuals in the group, such as the leader.

A *goal* exists when there is a cooperative attempt to reach a common objective.

Cohesiveness is measured by the extent to which individuals want to maintain group membership.

Awareness of membership occurs when the individuals are clear about who is included and who is excluded from a place in the group.

"The greater the development of a group along each of these six dimensions, the higher its solidarity" (Wilson, 1978: p. 60).

The energy and commitment that surrounded the group's continuing attempts to move toward commercial and artistic success under John Lennon's leadership through the early 1960s are well-documented in the principal biographies of the Beatles (Coleman, 1984; Davies, 1985; Norman, 1981). Whereas some of the group's previous drummers (i.e., Tommy Moore, Johnny Hutchinson, and Norman Chapman) had clearly been temporary recruits, there is little doubt that Best was a valued and integral part of the Beatles. He probably performed live with the group for more hours than did Ringo Starr (Giuliano and Giuliano, 1995: p. 209), and "in many ways the Best family was inextricably involved with the group. . . . Mona Best [Pete's mother] had done a great amount of booking and management chores" (Brown and Gaines, 1983: p. 70). In fact, it was Mona Best who first contacted The Cavern on behalf of the Beatles; and it was through the Bests that Neil Aspinall, who was living at their home, became the group's road manager in 1961, staying on to become managing director at Apple, a position he still holds today.

In fact, all six elements of group solidarity appear to be more than adequately satisfied when assessing Best's two years with the Beatles. As Harry (1992) noted, "During this time, Pete had become firmly installed as a member of the group, not only on stage" (p. 91). There is little, if anything, to indicate that the composition of the Beatles at that time did not coincide exactly with the criteria presented in many social–psychological attempts to define the small group:

> A group is two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction, each aware of his or her membership in the group, each aware of the others who belong to the group, and each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals. (Johnson and Johnson, 1987: p. 8)

Best's expulsion from the Beatles in August 1962, therefore, can be seen as the departure of a full member of a recognizable and cohesive social group—

which, of course, helps to explain why, decades later, it continues to provoke such discussion and debate.

Through a consideration of historical texts—descriptive, analytical, and narrative—and biography and autobiography, several contrasting accounts of the event can be identified and grouped together in separate and competing categories of social–psychological explanation. Of course, some writers simply record the event with no further investigation or comment. In his autobiography, the group's first manager, Alan Williams, merely reported: "[T]he Beatles—that is, John, George, Paul, and their new boss, Brian—decided that Pete Best was out and Ringo was in" (Williams and Marshall, 1975: p. 214). An equally brief view was offered by Garbarini, Cullman, and Graustark (1980) in their biography of John Lennon: "At this point, Pete Best had been unceremoniously dumped as their drummer and had been replaced by Ringo" (p. 47).

These and similar descriptions came from commentators who "are clearly compilers of alleged facts which they try to refrain from interpreting" (Mills, 1959: p. 159). While it might be argued that such descriptions are advantaged by their accuracy (in that they contain little that can be challenged), they are at the same time (and more importantly) disadvantaged by their lack of curiosity. In this way, such accounts can be seen as without purpose. They record but do not inform; they note but do not teach. But such examples are relatively uncommon; the vast majority of the literature on the Beatles at least attempts to satisfy the authors' curiosity by incorporating explanations that, in turn, lend themselves to classification.

1. DEVIANCY

> A group has a potent punishment for a member who persists in his deviancy despite pressures on him to shift: it may re-define its boundaries so as to exclude the deviant . . . he may be set apart so that no one talks or listens to him, he may be dropped from activities of the group, or he may be expelled. (Cartwright and Zander, 1968: p. 145)

Several authors have explained Pete Best's expulsion in terms of personal and social incompatibility with the other Beatles. In a group distinguished by extroverted and excessive behavior, some have alleged that Best's conservativism, as evidenced by his reluctance to engage in some central activities, was seen as deviance or nonconformity within the specific normative and behavioral environment of the Beatles. The significance of the unique social and professional environment within which creative artists reside has been well-documented. As Becker noted, "Musicians . . . believe they are under no obligation to imitate

the conventional behavior of squares. . . . Accordingly, behavior which flouts conventional social norms is greatly admired" (1963: p. 87). The expectation that members should reject certain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in order to embrace others—almost as a condition of membership—may impose severe restrictions on the personal freedom of individual group members, but it undoubtedly results in a greater cohesiveness and likelihood of goal fulfilment.

The extent to which Best's conventionality breached this uniformity, according to some, thus created a gulf between him and the other members, which widened on every occasion when there was a discrepancy between his actions and expectations and those of the others, until the distance was too great to be recovered and expulsion became unavoidable. Paul McCartney adopted this explanation:

> Pete had never quite been like the rest of us. We were the wacky trio and Pete was perhaps a little more . . . sensible; he was slightly different from us, he wasn't quite as artsy as we were. And we just didn't hang out that much together. (quoted in Lewisohn, 1988: p. 6)

McCartney's statement was a striking ratification of Becker's comment that "the musician thus views himself and his colleagues as people with a special gift which makes them different from non-musicians and not subject to their control, either in musical performance or in ordinary social behavior" (1963: p. 89).

But we must exercise caution in admitting the veracity of autobiographies or personal interviews, since it may be that "the author's purpose is less to offer an objective account than to justify his or her actions in retrospect . . . [as] a record of events they are often inaccurate and selective to the point of distortion" (Tosh, 1984: p. 32). The impulse for such distortions, if they exist, may range from the gradual acquisition of a changed set of memories and reflections over time to a deliberate attempt to mislead. In this case, however, there are several supporting conclusions from two other principal sources.

First, we find similar explanations from friends and contemporaries who were present in Liverpool in the early 1960s. In the opinion of John Lennon's close friend, Peter Shotton, "Pete never shared in the camaraderie of the others . . . the bottom line is that the Beatles were bored with Pete Best—and that, of course, was always fatal" (Shotton and Schaffner, 1983: p. 71). And according to Paddy Delaney, doorman at The Cavern, Best's dismissal was not unexpected: "It was inevitable. Pete wouldn't conform to the style Brian Epstein wanted for them. He also didn't believe in a lot of the things the boys may have been into at the time" (Baird and Giuliano, 1988: pp. 92–93).

Second, these conclusions are offered in some of the many biographies of the group and its members. Biography is endorsed by sociologists like Mills, who defined it (along with history and society) as one of "the coordinate points of the proper study of man" (1959: p. 159). But it is mistrusted by those historians who believe that history and biography possess separate rules and procedures, and that "even at its best, biography is a poor way of writing history" (Elton, 1969: p. 169). Nevertheless, since so much of the (contemporary) historical investigation of popular culture has taken the form of biography, it would be perverse to ignore what it has to say.

Thus Connolly, in a biography of John Lennon, incorporated those early Liverpool assessments into his conclusion that "many who saw the Beatles in those days have observed that Best simply seemed out of touch with the other three" (1981: p. 49). In the only authorized biography of the Beatles, Davies considered other theories, but finally resolved that "they'd never felt Pete was one of them and it was only a matter of time" (1985: p. 153). Flippo's verdict echoed this sentiment: "[I]t was just that they wanted Pete out. They had needed a drummer to get to Hamburg and Pete had been convenient, but he had worn out his usefulness" (1988: p. 170). Clayson referred to specific examples of Best's deviancy—including his steadfast refusal to consume amphetamines in Hamburg and his reluctance to adopt the group's distinctive hairstyle—in explaining his belief that "his [Best's] dismissal in August 1962 may be ascribed to an inability to conform to the mores of his peers" (1990: p. 63).

Such apparently superficial elements as these should not be hastily overlooked. As part of the symbolic, ritual aspects of behavior that characterize membership in any society, community, or group, they are immensely significant in presenting evidence of cohesion. Appearance is an especially important example of this, as Cartwright and Zander noted: "[T]he members of an adolescent group are readily identified by their distinctive style of dress . . . even among dedicated nonconformists, one finds a monotonous similarity of hair styles" (1968: p. 139). The significance the Beatles attached to conformity of appearance is clear when one recalls that one of the conditions to which Ringo Starr had to agree when he was invited to join the group was to "comb his hair forward and shave off his beard" (Norman, 1981: p. 154).

Clearly, however, reducing Best's rejection by the other Beatles to a disagreement over physical appearance would be naive in the extreme. That disagreement is simply one manifestation of the personal and social divisions that may have existed between them and that served to differentiate Best from the others. In their references to Best's inability to satisfy the expectations of other group members, these accounts draw directly on the archetypal definition of *labeling theory*, presented (appropriately enough) in a book that examines the

social behavior of musicians: "Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infractions constitute deviance, and by applying these rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders" (Becker, 1963: p. 9). Best's failure to follow the rules and conventions developed by the other Beatles resulted in his being labeled an outsider and his disqualification from membership in the group, both socially and professionally.

2. CONFLICT

> Whatever makes a member impressive in the eyes of others can also make him unattractive, because for members to admit his attractiveness is to admit their own inferiority. (Wilson, 1978: p. 134)

The dynamics of group membership involve a constant process of evaluation, adjustment, and comparison. High-status members (such as leaders) draw approval and recognition from those of lower status, who, in turn, rely on the high-status members for provision of scarce resources. Status consensus is present when members are in agreement over one another's positions within the group, and this naturally contributes to solidarity. The potential for solidarity weakens, however, when there is conflict over members' status.

In seeking to explain Best's departure from the Beatles, many authors have suggested that it was primarily due to internal conflict caused by the jealousy of other group members over Best's attractiveness and popularity, which gave him an enhanced status to which they objected. To be at all convincing, this interpretation requires two elements: a demonstration that Best was a popular and attractive individual, and a persuasive argument that these factors were resented by the other members.

On the first count, there seems to be complete agreement: Best was physically attractive, and people perceived this as advantageous to the Beatles. Producer George Martin's impression of Best at their first meeting in June 1962 was that "he did have the advantage of being the handsomest of the group . . . rather like James Dean" (1979: p. 123). Liverpool promoter Ron Appleby, who regularly presented the Beatles in the early 1960s, commented of Best: "He was definitely the big attraction with the group, and did much to establish their popularity during their early career" (quoted in Harry, 1992: p. 91).

In March of 1962, when the group made their first live radio recording at the Playhouse Theatre in Manchester, for the BBC radio show "Teenagers Turn," the Liverpool music paper *Mersey Beat* reported: "John, Paul and George made their entrance on stage to cheers and applause, but when Pete walked out—the

fans went wild! The girls screamed. In Manchester his popularity was assured by his looks alone" (Goldman, 1988: p. 147). And at Litherland Town Hall in Liverpool, in February of 1961, the topography of the group's stage performance had been adjusted to capitalize on Best's appeal:

> His popularity grew to the extent that it was decided to place him in front of the other three. The idea of placing a drummer in front of the line-up was unprecedented . . . the stage was mobbed, and the girls surged forward and almost pulled him off. (Harry, 1992: p. 91)

In itself, such individual popularity might be seen as beneficial for the group as a whole; but if the balance of power and stability are to remain unthreatened, some sort of controls are needed. There is, for example, a body of research indicating that "physical attractiveness was positively related to acceptance, with one important exception: extremely attractive individuals tended to be rejected" (Forsyth, 1983: p. 69). Several writers have pursued the implications of this conclusion to support the second element of the conflict argument: that the Beatles deliberately ousted Pete Best because they resented his greater attractiveness.

Such contributions to history do not simply incorporate the imagination of the writer—they demand it. From a distance of several decades, these accounts can be based *only* upon observers' reports of what they *thought* they saw or heard or understood at the time. The equilibrium of critical distance and emotional empathy becomes hard to maintain. This is not to devalue such contributions, but rather to illuminate their principal features.

In the particular case of Pete Best and the Beatles, opinion again comes both from those involved at the time and from later analysts:

> According to many who were present, the main reason for sacking Pete can be summed up in one word—jealousy. John, Paul, and George were extremely jealous of Pete's ability to attract girls. Too many female fans openly acknowledged Pete as the group's leader and the most handsome Beatle. (Pawlowski, 1989: p. 79)

In particular, Mona Best's explanation was unequivocal: "Pete's beat had made them. They were jealous and they wanted him out" (Davies, 1985: p. 151).

The attribution of jealousy—or, more accurately, envy—to one or more of the Beatles continued in subsequent accounts of their history. Goldman, for example, claimed:

John Lennon had resented Pete's quiet strength nearly as much as Paul McCartney was jealous of Pete's good looks. Ultimately, the balance of power in the Beatles had to be struck between John and Paul, neither of whom had any use for a third man whose appeal could not be denied or surpassed. (1988: pp. 147–148)

And Lewisohn's explanation of events included this claim: "A plan was hatching in the minds of John, Paul and George to oust him once and for all. It was based largely on jealousy. Jealousy of Pete's good looks, and the way he attracted the better girls" (1986: p. 96).

While it may be argued that these are immensely juvenile—and some would say offensively sexist—reasons for the conflict, social psychologists who study intragroup conflict have long stressed that it is the conflict itself rather than its apparent cause that is significant. Informal groups have been portrayed as "involving constant struggles and competition among members to out-perform one another on abilities of all sorts" (Wilson, 1978: p. 130). In addition, the scale of the conflict is important, as Moreland, Levine, and Wingert noted:

> Moderate levels of conflict are often helpful—rivalries can motivate group members to work harder, arguments can lead group members to think about problems in more complex ways, and challenges can reveal which group members are really best at particular tasks. But higher levels of conflict are often harmful, diverting so much time and energy from work that group performance suffers. (1996: p. 17)

The momentum of these factors, then—Pete Best's popularity and the envy it provoked—led to the formation of a coalition between John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison. And coalitions are the focus of conflict with other members: "[W]ithin most informal groups, the issues that precipitate coalition formation revolve around subtle social-emotional problems of the group" (Wilson, 1978: p. 138). Lacking the individual authority to dictate the desired solution, members form a collective alliance that does possess the power to determine action.

Researchers have identified three conditions that lead to coalition formation: a belief that the coalition will be successful, an assumption among members that cooperation will lead to individual gain, and similarity along important dimensions. In the case of the Beatles, there was a striking "fit" for each condition.

- By opposing three to one the continued membership of Best, the alliance of Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison contained a numerical majority that would almost certainly prove successful.

- Individually, each would gain in that he would no longer be compared unfavorably with a competitor-colleague of greater popularity.

- The similarities between the three—in terms of appearance, attitudes, and values—were emphasized even more by the mutual position of envy and resentment in which all found themselves.

The substantive outcome, with the arrival of Ringo Starr, of a more comfortable and unthreatening group environment, in which the status of each was agreed upon and assured, again accorded with the theoretical prediction. "Coalitions in most informal groups become a part of the structure because they balance the power among members and help reach some consensus about relative ranks" (Wilson, 1978: p. 139). To this end, the removal of Pete Best may have allowed for the casting of four recognizable and distinct roles within the (restructured) group, which helped to confirm and consolidate its imminent success.

3. INCOMPETENCE

> Competent, intelligent, task-proficient people are viewed as more desirable group members than incompetents . . . . individuals with high levels of competence are relatively insulated from the possibility of receiving negative evaluations from others. (Forsyth, 1983: p. 68)

Individual competence in the performance of central group activities is an essential component of continued membership in a group. In small groups faced by a specific or problem-solving task, individuals deemed to possess low task ability are not insulated from negative evaluations and may risk disqualification from the group. For example, a member of a football team whose contribution consistently falls short of team expectations will face the threat of removal. It is in the mutual interest of all that the skills performance of all should be effective.

Conformity to group norms is not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee membership; full integration of an individual into the group demands active assistance toward the realization of its goals. Neither is mere support enough, however enthusiastic that might be. "It is generally agreed that in task groups the primary basis for status and influence is contribution to the group's task activity" (Ridgeway, 1981: p. 336).

This is the framework in which many writers have placed the story of Pete Best and the Beatles. In many ways it is the simplest of the offered explanations:

Best was dismissed because his drumming was not considered good enough, and he was replaced by someone whose ability was greater. Several of the story's leading protagonists have confirmed their role in this interpretation. George Martin, for example, stated:

> I decided that Pete Best had to go. I said to Brian Epstein, "I don't care what you do with Pete Best, he is not playing on any more recording sessions. I'm getting a session drummer in, because above all these guys need a good drummer." (1994: p. 143)

Paul McCartney added to his previous reasoning by emphasizing: "I wasn't jealous of him, because he was handsome. He just couldn't play. Ringo was so much better. We wanted him out for that reason" (in Davies, 1985: p. 471).

Mike McCartney concurred: "There were quite a few drummers around Liverpool and I used to go home and tell Paul about Ringo. It was basically down to his drumming ability in the end" (quoted in Giuliano and Giuliano, 1995: p. 218).

This general estimation of Best's poor musicianship was echoed by Jackie Lomax, lead singer of a Liverpool group called the Undertakers, who was subsequently signed to Apple as a solo artist: "He could only play one drum beat, slowed up or speeded up" (quoted in Clayson, 1990: p. 76).

There is some difficulty, however, in accepting at face value these accounts, in that they contradict two of the principal tenets of a satisfactory history.

First, they are necessarily subjective. None attempts to specify the criteria by which "good" drumming can be distinguished from "poor" drumming, or to apply those criteria to the Beatles. One is left with a suspicion that such judgments are less objective analyses than reflections of personal taste.

This hesitation is increased when one considers the large number of conflicting assessments of Best's ability. For example, Liverpool promoter Sam Leach insisted, "[I]t was Pete's heavy beat that was partially responsible for the Beatles' unique sound. Pete was a lot more than a 'boom-boom drummer' sitting at the back" (1999: p. 174). And Gerry Marsden (of Gerry and the Pacemakers) said of the early Beatles: "They had Pete Best on drums and he used to drive like crazy. He was great . . . you know, this lovely driving rhythm they used to get. He was great with the band, you know. Good drummer, Pete" (quoted in Somach, Somach, and Gunn, 1989: p. 51). Such differences of opinion over past events are not to be regretted; indeed they are inevitable, since one's own perspective

can only ever be *part* of a situation that is informed by many other perspectives. Equally, they are valuable, as Tosh noted: "[T]he very subjectivity of the speaker may be the most important thing about his or her testimony" (1984: p. 181). But they are always partial.

The second problem with the competency accounts is that they are constructed and presented with the benefit of hindsight: "We know what happened next . . . the significance which we attach to a particular incident is inescapably conditioned by that knowledge" (Tosh, 1984: p. 121). So, judgments about Best's replacement by Ringo Starr are conditioned by our knowledge that, shortly after the change, the Beatles went on to achieve unprecedented successes. We may well find a tendency, then, to infer that the two events were causally related, and that the change in the composition of the group was responsible for what followed.

Such a conclusion is reinforced by the popularity of certain perspectives within social psychology on the dynamics of group membership.

> Some researchers regard group composition as a *consequence* or outcome that needs to be explained. Other researchers regard group composition as a *context* that moderates or shapes various behavioral phenomena. But most researchers regard group composition as a *cause* that can influence many other aspects of group life, including group structure, dynamics, and performance. (Moreland et al., 1996: p. 12)

This perspective promotes the view that the speed and enormity of the Beatles' success from 1963 on are themselves clear justifications of the claim that Pete Best's poor musicianship had restricted, and would have continued to restrict, the group's opportunities for advancement, and equally clear proofs of the wisdom in replacing him. What such casuistry accomplishes is the elevation of theories into facts—promoting the theory that Pete Best was a weak or limited musician into an historical and logically uncontestable fact.

Had Best's drumming appeared competent to the rest of the group, his membership would not have been threatened. But because his perceived competence—"the assistance the individual provides in helping the group to achieve favourable outcomes on its main task" (Hollander, 1976: p. 485)—was low, his status, his security, and ultimately his career in the group were undermined. And the explanation becomes still more attractive in that it invites us to see the result as ultimately fair and just: "the general idea of distributive justice is that group members with greater perceived investments, such as competence, are entitled to more behavioral outcomes than group members with lower perceived investments" (Wilke, 1996: p. 76).

4. STATUS LIABILITY

> As long as there is still hope of achieving the group goal, the group will bear with him because of (a) his past performance, and (b) their future need of his services. However, if his behavior interferes to the degree that the group's goal is jeopardised, the members will punish him. (Wiggins, Dill, and Schwartz, 1965: p. 198)

According to Hollander's theory of idiosyncrasy credits (Hollander, 1958, 1976), group members secure and maintain their membership by demonstrations of competence and conformity, which bring them symbolic "credits," which can then be exchanged for status. In other words, an efficient contribution to the achievement of the group's goals and a commitment to its norms and values should, under normal circumstances, guarantee membership. Any deviations from these norms or lapses in performance will be covered by the stock of credits the member has acquired. Minor infringements lead to a relatively small drain on these symbolic resources; more serious infringements result in a greater depletion. But as the satisfactory routine enactments of daily membership are adding directly and continuously to each person's credit account, any single transgression is unlikely to have major consequences for established members.

However, the possibility always exists that a single deviant act may occur of such proportions that it threatens the attainment of the group's goal, or its very existence. Such an act bankrupts the individual's stock of credits immediately and irrevocably and, "by definition, affiliation with the group—as perceived by the group—ceases when the individual's credit balance reaches zero" (Hollander, 1958: p. 121). This phenomenon is referred to as *status liability*.

The sudden and unexpected nature of Best's removal persuaded many that it had not been preplanned or anticipated. The fact that it came just two weeks after Parlophone's decision to offer the group a recording contract added to the conviction that—at such a time of celebration and success—it could not have reflected any long-term dissatisfaction with his performance.

There had to be another reason; thus, Pete Best's departure from the Beatles has been construed by some as an immediate reaction by the rest of the group to an unstated transgression, whose wider circulation would have so severely jeopardized the group's ability to reach its goal that the only possible solution was his dismissal. Understandably, none of the accounts offer details of the behavior, other than to hint at its existence. Mellers pointed to the "slightly dubious circumstances" (1973: p. 189) of Best's exit, while Lewisohn referred to "so-called 'insiders' privy to the group [who] claim . . . that they know other, more salacious, reasons" (1986: p. 97). Others questioned the "official" version of-

fered by Brian Epstein, which spoke of musical and personal differences: "I must say in all fairness to Best that his own version and the versions I subsequently heard from other people close to the Bests at the time are at slight variance with the account of Epstein's" (Tremlett, 1975: p. 46).

Only Coleman's description of a meeting over dinner, shortly after Best's departure, between Epstein, Ted Knibbs (the manager of Billy J. Kramer), and local promoter/music writer Bob Wooler, referred directly to anything more, although again the details are absent:

> Reminding Epstein of his journalistic interests [Wooler] suddenly announced: "I am going to tell the *true* Pete Best story." There was a pregnant silence. "You can't do *that,*" Epstein said. Wooler and Epstein's declamations implied that there was more to the sacking of Best than had been admitted. Wooler was defiant. "I *am* going to do it." Red-faced and fuming with fury, Epstein repeated: "You can't do that. You just can't." (Coleman, 1989: pp. 125–126)

The fact that this account is constructed like a passage in a novel, even to the inclusion of remembered or invented dialogue, does not necessarily render it inadmissible as an historical document. The combination of evidence and supposition—of fact and fiction--is an intellectual process familiar in literature and poetry and is a legitimate device in history. As Plumb noted, "History . . . requires imagination, creativity and empathy, as well as observation as accurate as a scholar can make it" (1969: p. 12). If, as has been suggested, "all history is interpretive and never literally true" (Jenkins, 1995: p. 23), then the passage—which clearly cannot be literally true—is not exceptional, but a typical example of the ways writers manipulate the traces of the past to create histories.

In this case, the history created is the assertion that the full circumstances of Best's rejection by the Beatles have not yet been revealed. It implies there must have been a specific cause—an incident or series of events—that has remained concealed for years, and that the more familiar accounts of his departure gained currency because of their expediency rather than their accuracy. And its conclusion is that the behavior—or the public knowledge of such—was perceived to be so extreme or damaging in its consequences that his credit rating within the group was immediately exhausted and his membership curtailed.

CONCLUSIONS

It is not my objective here to identify the "correct" theory of Best's departure—or even the most plausible of a limited number of alternative explanations. How-

ever, it is relevant to note that each of the foregoing sets of theories has been rejected by Pete Best himself.

He continues to ridicule the suggestion that his conventional behavior isolated him from three more unconventional group members: "What they mean by 'conventional,' God only knows. If they say, 'he wouldn't act the goat as much as the rest of them,' then they've got to be joking! Conventionality went out the window!" (Best, 1995).

Similarly, he sees no logic in the notion that his dismissal was the result of conflict that stemmed from the others' jealousy: "I know my mother thinks they were jealous of me, but I don't think it was that. We had a group sound. It wasn't just one person" (in Davies, 1985: p. 30).

Best has strenuously refuted the suggestion that he was an unsuitable or incompetent drummer: "Never to my face, during my two years as a Beatle, did one of them declare that my drumming was not up to standard" (Best and Doncaster, 1985: p. 174).

And he has always denied knowledge of any factors that may have made his membership a liability or risk to the group's success: "As far as I'm concerned, there was no build-up to it . . . it would have been nice if I'd been in the position to defend myself . . . it would have been nice to have had them there and actually ask the reasons why" (Giuliano and Giuliano, 1995: p. 208).

Just as the most enthusiastic advocacies of a theory do not guarantee its accuracy, so a denial does not necessarily undermine the right of that theory to be examined seriously. Implicit in that examination, however, must be an awareness that the practice of oral history—the first-hand recollections of people interviewed by a writer or researcher—presents major difficulties. In particular, as Tosh noted:

> [I]t is naive to suppose that the testimony represents a pure distillation of past experience, for in an interview each party is affected by the other. The presence of an outsider affects the atmosphere in which the informant recalls the past and talks about it. (1984: p. 178)

When those interviewed are among the most celebrated representatives of popular culture, whose faces, voices, and apparent histories are familiar to audiences around the world, these differences are magnified. The explicit presence of the interviewer and the implied presence of huge numbers of attentive and enthusiastic fans can do nothing but distort the reliability of recollection.

Those not acquainted with historical research may well question how there can be so many conflicting accounts of a singular, relatively recent event, and further wonder whether this "renders all the history supposedly known a matter of private choice and interpretation, so that in the end there is nothing but subjective opinion, the very opposite to truth" (Elton, 1969: p. 70). At one level, this questioning is correct. The past does not survive in a form that allows for our complete understanding; furthermore, our knowledge of it is constantly refined and modified as new records, new evidence, and new voices come to our attention.

To the question, "What is the true story of Pete Best and the Beatles?" the answer must be that it does not exist. And it is unlikely ever to exist, because contemporary re-creation of the past is impossible and all accounts of the past inherently rely on interpretation, imagination, and invention. To study this particular moment in the history of popular culture through the theoretical lens of social psychology is simply to provide an example of the problems of historical assignments. There are many other examples, both within popular music (the death of Elvis Presley—murder, accident, suicide, or faked), and outside it (the assassination of President Kennedy and the death of Princess Diana), wherein the explanations routinely offered are characterized by comparable disagreements and uncertainties.

Furthermore, the members of the Beatles themselves have demonstrated a general reluctance to offer consistent or comprehensive accounts of several of the significant events and periods in their lives. In particular, their self-produced *Anthology* documentary series (1995) revealed a clutch of conspicuous absences—"mainly biographical and career matters: the firing of Pete Best, the Beatles' use of drugs, their legal battles with each other" (Burns, 2000: p. 184)—which might suggest that the narratives created by the familiar stories of Pete Best serve to perpetuate a history that is at least tolerated by the remaining group members.

Two final observations, applicable to historical research in general, may be of particular value to attempts to record and comprehend the narratives of popular culture. The first is the recognition that "historical writing of all kinds is determined as much by what it leaves out as by what it puts in" (Tosh, 1984: p. 113). The second is the advice given by Carr: "Study the historian before you begin to study the facts" (1961: p. 23).

Attempts to arrive at conclusions about Pete Best and the Beatles within the context of the group's interpersonal dynamics demonstrate with unusual clarity the importance of attending to both of these requirements.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

"THE BEATLES ARE COMING!"

CONJECTURE AND CONVICTION IN THE MYTH OF KENNEDY, AMERICA AND THE BEATLES

"The Beatles Are Coming!" Conjecture and Conviction in the Myth of Kennedy, America, and the Beatles

Ian Inglis

Introduction

In February 1964, "I Want To Hold Your Hand" became the first Beatles' record to top the U.S. singles charts. In the same month, the group's appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on CBS attracted the largest ever television audience of more than 73 million or 60 per cent of all U.S. viewers. By the end of March, they held the top five positions in the singles charts (and also had six of the top ten singles in Canada). Their first coast-to-coast U.S. tour, in August and September, saw them "perform before more people than any other artists in the history of American pop music—including Elvis Presley" (Rayl and Gunther 3). *The Wall Street Journal* estimated that by the end of the year Americans would spend more than $50 million on sales of Beatle-related merchandise (McCabe and Schonfeld 66).

The examples are well known, the statistics familiar. Just as it had done in the UK in the previous year, "Beatlemania blanketed the North American continent" (Schaffner 31) in 1964. In their eagerness to demonstrate the size and scale of the Beatles' U.S. triumphs, however, the initial reasons for that success tend to have been overlooked or, at best, accepted uncritically by many commentators and historians of the group. This is all the more surprising given the entirely unexpected nature of any British success in U.S. popular music. Apart from a handful of isolated chart entries by British performers in previous years (Lonnie Donegan, Acker Bilk, Laurie London, the Tornados, Hayley Mills) there had not been a single artist who had developed a prolonged reputation or sense of career; even for those who, like Cliff Richard, were popular in other parts of the world, the United States had proved an impossible market to enter.

What explanations there have been usually seek to make some general connection between the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963 and the group's arrival in February 1964; indeed, there is a conspicuous predictability in the way such theories are presented, whether by biographers, musicologists, or historians:

> Brian [Epstein] returned home to England a happy man that mid-November of 1963. It was just a week before Lee Harvey Oswald would lay America wide open to his boys. In a country that seemed so invulnerable to harm, everything was lost in a single moment. By January, the nation wanted desperately to hear something happy, to find a diversion, some distraction from the morbid tragedy that had intruded into their lives. America needed a tonic. (Brown and Gaines 96)

> America, in her post-Kennedy assassination gloom, needed the Beatles quite desperately. The entire country succumbed to the Beatles almost wholly. (Lewisohn 163)

> They put a smile on America's face. America was still in mourning for John F. Kennedy and people were in a state of deep depression. Suddenly, the Beatles were there. (Hutchins and Thompson 74)

> In the USA . . . the festive season . . . had been dampened by the recent assassination of President Kennedy. When Capitol . . . issued "I Want To Hold Your Hand," the record's joyous energy and invention lifted America out of its gloom, following which . . . the country cast itself at the Beatles' feet. (MacDonald 77)

> In America, the state of shock which followed the death of Kennedy lasted longer than in Britain. As the hysteria died down, a deep gloom fell over America which was to last over two months. And then in the first week in February, the trance was broken. The Beatles . . . touched down at New York. (Booker 232)

While not wishing to undermine the endeavors of those who seek to fully contextualize the emergence of the Beatles, it does seem that there is an exaggerated reliance on the two step flow model of "Kennedy—gloom—Beatles." Taken to its extreme, such a model implies that had Kennedy not been murdered in Dallas, the United States and much of the world might never have heard of the Beatles or their music—an alternative history I find difficult to accept. Although the Kennedy theory has passed into popular music folklore, to the extent that it is reiterated whenever the history of the Beatles is told, other explanations have been offered in subsequent accounts of the group's career which deserve to be reconsidered. As we move into the new millennium and indulge in the pastime of enumerating and evaluating the twentieth century's more significant achievements, the Beatles are prominent across a number of categories—musical, sociological, cultural, historical. Now may be an opportune moment to review those competing explanations of the

group's impact in America and its repercussions. What were the other factors which contributed to the U.S. success of the Beatles in 1964?

Musical: Internal

"The Beatles . . . did not invent a style but simply drew attention to sounds and styles that were current in the United States" (Gillett 321). From this perspective, the Beatles' popularity in the United States was constructed around their ability to appropriate and reassemble existing, and recognized, musical traditions which were themselves located in North America. Rock'n'roll (Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Larry Williams, Buddy Holly), soul (Arthur Alexander, Ben E. King, Chuck Jackson), early Motown (Marvin Gaye, the Miracles), and the pop compositions of Goffin and King were the principal components of a music that was "saturated with intertextuality" (Weinstein 141).

Further weight is added to this view when the group's own musical origins are considered, for all four were originally members of skiffle groups; and skiffle of course was itself a peculiarly British amalgam of North American folk, blues, and jazz traditions. Thus John Lennon and Paul McCartney in the Quarry Men Skiffle Group, George Harrison in the Les Stewart Quartet, and Ringo Starr in the Eddie Clayton Skiffle Group were largely inducted into the world of semi-professional music in the mid and late 1950s through their mimicry of British skiffle star Lonnie Donegan's reworkings of the songs of Woody Guthrie and Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly).

Their reliance on transatlantic styles is not surprising since, unlike other forms of entertainment such as the theater and film, where distinct British (or English) themes and traditions had developed, popular music in the UK was throughout the 1950s characterized by a number of creative constraints. These included a London-based commercial and artistic monopoly, a strict separation between songwriting and performing, a reluctance to include popular music on radio and television, and the promotion of British singers whose styles were evidently, often embarrassingly, copied from U.S. stars (Cliff Richard and Billy Fury from Elvis Presley, Adam Faith from Buddy Holly, Wee Willie Harris from Jerry Lee Lewis). The Beatles were able to confront and overthrow all of these restrictions by concentrating attention on Liverpool (and later Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle), establishing the convention of the singer-songwriter, alerting the radio and TV networks to the commercial possibilities of popular music, and, most significantly, presenting a *synthesis* rather than a *duplication* of musical genres. When re-presented to audiences in the United States, it thus appeared to be simultaneously fresh and familiar:

> The scale of the Beatles' success . . . was built upon a tangential jolting of the public musical cliche. Masterfully working through black and white pop traditions, they offered a novel, synthetic focus: an altered perspective, not a foreign landscape. (Chambers 63)

In drawing from a wide variety of musical styles, the Beatles were thus able to appeal to a wide variety of audiences, in a way in which few of their colleagues or immediate antecedents had been able to do. Poirier's comment that "they offer something for nearly everyone" (164) and the observation from jazz composer Ned Rorem that "the Beatles can legitimately be absorbed by all ages on all levels" (155) testify to the aesthetic advantages enjoyed by the group through its facility to efficiently fuse and present American musics to American audiences.

Musical: External

Before "I Want To Hold Your Hand" topped the U.S. charts in February 1964, the three previous Number One singles were Bobby Vinton's "There! I've Said It Again," the Singing Nun's "Dominique," and Dale and Grace's "I'm Leaving It Up To You." For the first year since 1955, Elvis Presley had failed to supply a chart-topping single in 1963; so too had many of his contemporaries from the earlier years of rock'n'roll in the mid 1950s. In their place, performers like Paul and Paula, Steve Lawrence, Little Peggy March, the Rooftop Singers, and Ruby and the Romantics had produced 1963's best selling records.

> Powerful pressure from a combination of religious and secular leaders, government officials, and major-label interests within the music industry had combined to hasten the demise of fifties rock. By the early sixties, the "music establishment" had reasserted its control. . . . *American Bandstand* sold America the well-dressed, well-behaved side of rock music. (Friedlander 70-71)

The emergence of what has been variously termed "highschool" (Cohn, *Awopbopaloobop*), "teen idol" (Shaw) or "rock and roll" in distinction to rock'n'roll (Gillett)—a style defined above all by its complacency and predictability—had by early 1964 created a popular music terrain in the United States that was largely bereft of innovation or ambition. Ironically, given his huge influence on the Beatles, it was the change in career trajectory of Elvis Presley himself that was perhaps the most significant element in the reorientation of popular music. The definitive gesture was Presley's decision to choose Frank Sinatra's ABC television show in May 1960 as the vehicle through which to re-introduce himself to the American public after the completion of his military

service. It was Sinatra, after all, who had described rock'n'roll as "phoney and false . . . sung, played and written for the most part by cretinous goons" (Palmer 130). That Presley should consent to appear on TV dressed in a tuxedo, swapping songs, and duetting with Sinatra would have been inconceivable a few years earlier. But the impact was remarkable. "Just like that, Elvis became an entertainer" (Flippo 41).

Once popular music had been reclaimed and remodelled by the *entertainment business* (both words are equally significant) the Beatles' impact in the United States was therefore emphatically amplified by the contrast between their music—"in 1964 the freshness of the Beatles' vocal assault was the sound of pure novelty . . . exhilarated, exuberant, joyous" (Marcus 219)—and the current American pop—"adolescent themes on unbelievably trite hits" (Shaw 108). If, as some have suggested, the history of popular music can be read as a series of revolutionary blows against the established practices of the time (rock'n'roll in the 1950s, the British Invasion in the 1960s, punk in the 1970s, rap in the 1980s, dance in the 1990s), the Beatles might be seen as the most innovative and important of all such moments. For, as promoter Arthur Howes has explained, their achievements in the United States were memorable not just in themselves, but for what they signaled: "the biggest thing the Beatles did was to open up the American market to all British artists. Nobody had ever been able to get in before the Beatles. They alone did it" (Davies 230).

Demographic

> In the United States the triumph of the Beatles had nothing to do with class [as in Britain] but was based rather on the cultural divisions produced by the generation gap. (Goldman 193)

Analyses of cultural trends in Western countries have repeatedly pointed to the importance of that cohort of consumers colloquially referred to as "baby boomers"—those who were born in the late 1940s and early 1950s to parents who had witnessed the disruptions of the Second World War and who now preferred to plan for an optimistic and prosperous future. The coming-of-age of this cohort coincided precisely with the arrival in the United States of the Beatles. "In 1964, seventeen-year-olds became the single largest age demographic in the country . . . American youth, in this era of affluence, had buying power never before experienced" (Rayl and Gunther 27). This segment would remain the center of the population spread for the next seven years. Furthermore, it was a cohort directly implicated in the debates and divisions engendered

by the Civil Rights Movement, and who would, all too soon, find itself even more acutely involved in the confusions resulting from America's involvement in Vietnam. The tensions from possessing unassailable financial prosperity within uncertain political and economic contours created, it has been alleged, "a new generation [whose] culture, clothes, music, drugs, ways of thought, and liberated life-style are not a passing fad . . . but part of a consistent philosophy" (Reich 11).

Out of this generation, the resultant potential audience for the Beatles was described in ways which run from benevolent support to indignant vilification. Describing his contact with audiences on the group's first U.S. tour, George Martin presented a reassuring portrait of a generation largely at ease with the adult world:

> It was an expression of youth, a slight kicking-over of the traces, which found a ready response in young people. Curiously, it was a response that the parents . . . did not seem to begrudge. (161)

However, a more sinister and dangerous network of subversive elements, with the Beatles' audience at its center, was identified by the *New York Journal American*'s boxing commentator Jimmy Cannon, in one of his regular attacks on Muhammad Ali:

> Clay is part of the Beatle movement. He fits in with the famous singers no one can hear, and the punks riding motor cycles with iron crosses pinned to their leather jackets, and Batman, and the boys with their long dirty hair, and the girls with the unwashed look,and the college kids dancing naked at secret proms . . . and the painters who copy the labels off soup cans, and the surf bums who refuse to work. (Hauser 145-46)

While the existence of a "Beatle movement" remains unproven, the existence of huge and enthusiastic Beatle audiences was demonstrably true. To the extent that these audiences were largely (but not solely) drawn from a population of newly affluent teenagers (half of whom were at school) it is plausible to suggest that the group's American impact rested in part on the fortunate coincidence that demographic trends had provided: "By virtue of sheer numbers and spending power, American teenagers now were more easily able to diffuse their causes, ideas and enthusiasms among other age groups. The timing of the Beatles' arrival in New York could not have been better" (McCabe and Schonfeld 62).

Structural

George Martin: When I first met them, there was no obvious leader. My thinking was so coloured by the success of people like Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard that I couldn't imagine a group being successful *as a group*. I was quite wrong. It hadn't been done before . . . but a group they were and a group they had to stay. (124-25)

In Britain, one of the principal reasons why the Beatles had been rejected by successive record labels was their failure to conform to the conventional lead singer-and-backing group model—Cliff Richard and the Shadows, Joe Brown and the Bruvvers, Johnny Kidd and the Pirates; indeed, they were turned down after their Decca audition in favor of the London-based Brian Poole and the Tremeloes for exactly that reason, as was made clear to Brian Epstein by Dick Rowe, Head of Artists & Repertoire:

Groups are out, four piece groups with guitars particularly are finished. The boys won't go, Mr. Epstein. We know these things. You have a good business in Liverpool. Stick to that. (Epstein 51)

In America too, the same confidence in the propriety of solo performers and opposition to guitar-based male groups was evident. In 1960-63, 51 of the records to have topped the U.S. singles charts were by solo singers, and just ten by male groups (the majority of which—the Tokens, the Highwaymen, the Four Seasons—were harmony-based). In revealing themselves unequivocally as a unified *group* to the American public, the Beatles presented a structural innovation, which also confirmed the template of lead guitar, bass guitar, rhythm guitar, and drums for the decades that followed.

The immediate significance of this as a factor in their success is that the promotion of the Beatles as four self-contained individuals subsumed within a greater whole—each possessing separate roles, personalities, and abilities—allowed the U.S. public multiple points of contact. Not just with the Beatles, but with the Beatles *and* John *and* Paul *and* George *and* Ringo. "You did not have to love them all to love the group, but you could not love one without loving the group, and this was why the Beatles became bigger than Elvis; this was what had never happened before" (Marcus 215).

Their personae were in different ways invented, exaggerated, and stereotyped, especially in the two movies *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* which employed and consolidated the imagery of the four individuals

around whom so much of the group's collective public attraction was based. Nevertheless, the constant assertions that the sum of the Beatles was greater than the parts informed a commercial strategy that was hugely impressive:

> That quality of self-containment was . . . crucial to their invasion of America. Watch the newsreels of them deplaning at Kennedy, or of their appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and they look like the four limbs of a single anatomy. Their whole power was in their unity. (Cohn, "Remember" 13)

Subsequent history has borne this out. While other groups from the same era managed to overcome personnel changes and to elongate their career (the Rolling Stones, the Grateful Dead, the Beach Boys, The Who), the credibility of any attempt to create a reconstituted Beatles has always been dismissed by its members and the public.

> Any self is invented as soon as any purpose is conceived. But the Beatles are a special case in not being a *self* at all. They are a group. . . . Like members of a great athletic team, like such partners in dance as Nureyev and Fonteyn, or like some jazz combos, the Beatles . . . seem to draw their aspirations and energy . . . from one Another. (Poirier 166)

Sexual

> Girls had screamed for pop stars before, but never quite like this—hunched into a foetal position, alternately punching their sides, covering their eyes and stuffing handkerchiefs and fists into their mouths. Hundreds of the seats were wringing wet. Many had puddles of urine beneath them. (Norman 183)

The suggestion that the nature and scale of the response by what were overwhelmingly young, white, female audiences to the Beatles demonstrated a vicarious encounter of a kind previously unavailable in contemporary America was in general circulation in 1964. As Schaffner has reported, there was no shortage of media experts who, in their explanations of Beatlemania, "testified that Beatle concerts provoked simulated sexual experiences that brought many fans to the point of orgasm" (17). From Rudolph Valentino through Frank Sinatra to Elvis Presley, the erotic tension between male star and female fan had been exploited and commented on almost routinely. There were, however, two significant points of difference in the case of the Beatles. They were four, not one; and the nature of their sexuality was that of a playful androgyny.

Their long hair, high-heel boots, cover versions of girl groups' songs, falsetto voices, love of harmony, and "the puckish way they

clowned for the camera" (Douglas 116) set them apart from the intimidating presence of overt sexual menace embodied by Elvis Presley (whose early appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* had been restricted to above-the-waist shots because of the perceived obscenity of his pelvic gyrations) and the frustrating absence of any form of sexual interest which characterized the Ricky Nelsons, Bobby Vees and Tab Hunters of the time. While some commentators have pointed out that in fact much of their music was as aggressively sexual as anyone else's—"Please Please Me" has been read as a song about mutual masturbation (Connolly 58-59)—the more evocative themes of the Beatles' songs and performances were, uniquely, that androgyny was sexy and that sex was fun.

> The Beatles construed sex more generously and playfully, lifting it out of the rigid scenario of mid-century American gender roles . . . they seemed to offer sexuality that was guileless, ebullient and fun . . . theirs was a vision of sexuality freed from the shadow of gender inequality because the group mocked the gender distinctions that bifurcated the American landscape into "his" and "hers." (Ehrenreich *et al.* 102)

In challenging such traditions, the Beatles were to accomplish much more. By undermining the divisions, hierarchies, and conventions of sexuality in the early 1960s, the group was exposing the possibility of alternatives. It has been pointed out that the young women who participated in the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s were from the same generation who had seen in the Beatles a first opportunity to revolt against the structural and cultural constraints embedded in a highly sexualized society. In 1964 "cracks were beginning to appear in the walls restraining female energy and sexuality" (Douglas 121). It is ironic that John Lennon's later support for the feminist movement, which he saw as a belated attempt to recompense his self-confessed earlier sexism, should be inspected and largely rejected by many who had first been alerted to the politics of change by the singer himself: "Beatlemania was the first mass outburst of the sixties to feature women . . . it was the first and most dramatic uprising of women's sexual revolution" (Ehrenreich *et al* 85).

Personal

The concept of charisma is among the most overused and misused that sociology has produced. Repeatedly employed today to describe sports personalities, politicians, teachers, actors, chat-show hosts, disc-jockeys, it is far removed from its original formulation in which an indi-

vidual "is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Weber 358). The possession of remarkable abilities and personalities has similarly been attributed to the Beatles by those who have sought to explain the group's extraordinary success in equally extraordinary terms. Timothy Leary's declaration that "the Beatles are mutants . . . prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power . . . the wisest, holiest, most effective avatars the human race has ever produced" (Norman 287) is perhaps one of the more extravagant examples. A more typical sentiment is Gillett's conclusion that "there was something else about them, and it was this that transformed the nature of the world's popular music—their character as people" (311).

Among some sociologists there is a reluctance to admit the possibility of the influence of the individual. In its place is a tendency to search for broad trends, general associations, shifting patterns of change or continuity in which, at best, individuals may merely play a part. But just as it would be ill-judged to consider the achievements of the Civil Rights movement without examining the specific contribution of Martin Luther King, or to chart the history of apartheid without recognizing the singular character of Nelson Mandela, so too it would be wrong to review the U.S. success of the Beatles without noting the impact and consequences of the group's particular *style*: "it was to Americans the first indication that pop stars needn't necessarily be morons or phonies" (Schaffner 10).

It may be significant that it is this aspect that has been stressed more than any other in the personal testimonies of those present at the time. Producer George Martin's opinion that "the most impressive thing was their engaging personalities . . . they were just great people to be with" (123) and manager Brian Epstein's description of them as "quite magnificent human beings" (85) seem also to have been shared by those without commercial reasons for promoting the group's appeal. The memoirs of American fans repeatedly emphasize the group's proto-charismatic, almost messianic attraction:

> You couldn't help but love the Beatles because individually and collectively they had such wonderful personalities. (Mitchell 13)

> What the Beatles accomplished stands as a legacy . . . the Beatles represented everything that was *right* with the world . . . it created a bond between fans and followers . . . you were one with the people around you. (Larkin 96)

> We were the world's most loyal fans . . . we were happy and proud to know the Beatles and hope they felt something of the same towards us. (Bedford 294)

It might be thought that the protestations of love, adoration, and pride contained in what are, after all, artificial social relations go far beyond familiar notions of enjoyment and pleasure, and may approach the pathological. If so, this need not be surprising. Weber believed that in conditions "where established routines, expectations and symbols are broken up or are under attack" (71), attachment to a charismatic movement is a plausible outcome. And there is little doubt that in 1964 the Beatles did indeed mock and undermine many of those familar routines, expectations and symbols. In doing so, they were shifting and re-aligning more than merely musical boundaries and barriers. "The Beatles affected not only the feel but the quality of life . . . they deepened it, sharpened it, brightened it" (Marcus 216). That their *demeanor* was crucial to their success is recognized in Bangs's comment that the subsequent British Invasion was "more important as an event, as a *mood*, than as music" (202)—a mood that was created and defined by the Beatles. "America was no more accustomed than had been Britain to singers who were witty and intelligent and derisive of social conventions" (Gillett 313).

Promotional

Throughout 1963, the songs associated with the Beatlemania which had developed in the UK had also been available in the United States. Vee Jay had released "Please Please Me" in February and "From Me To You" in May; both singles had failed to enter the charts, had received little radio airplay and had generally gone unnoticed. The same failure greeted Swan's release of "She Loves You" in September. What made the reaction to the next release, on Capitol, of "I Want To Hold Your Hand" so startling?

> America did not fall to the Beatles by accident. The success . . . was the result of a carefully orchestrated campaign organised by Brian Epstein and Capitol Records: it was a massive campaign of hype. On this rare occasion the hype was worth the effort. (Connolly 63)

Having persuaded Bob Precht, the producer of *The Ed Sullivan Show*, to book the Beatles for two headlining appearances in February, largely as a result of Sullivan's own curiosity about the Beatles' impact in Europe, Epstein was able to convince Capitol executive Brown Meggs to release the new single. In addition, the label authorized an astonishing $50,000 (its previous highest budget for a new artist had been $5,000) for a promotional budget to finance what has been described as "the most frantic hype ever" (Cohn, *Awopbopaloobop* 131). Five million posters bearing the announcement "The Beatles Are Coming!" were dis-

tributed around the country. Radio stations were supplied with all of the group's records. Question-and-answer discs and scripts were sent to the leading disc jockeys so that they could apparently "interview" the Beatles on the air. Full-page advertisements were taken out in the major music trade magazines. One million copies of a souvenir Beatles newspaper were given away. Beatles Kits containing photographs, badges, and a Beatle wig were supplied to all those even remotely connected with the operation. As a result, "when Capitol released 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' backed by 'I Saw Her Standing There' on December 26, 1963, the American music-industry pump was fully primed" (Friedlander 85).

Furthermore, the stupendous welcome given to the group by 5,000 fans on its arrival at New York's Kennedy Airport on February 7, and whose televised re-enactment has become a potent symbol of the exuberance of American Beatlemania, was also carefully choreographed as part of the same promotional strategy. Aware that the arrival itself could be used to create additional publicity, Nicky Byrne, the head of Seltaeb (the group's merchandising agency), was able to persuade New York radio stations WMCA and WINS to play their part in the projected events. "Every fifteen minutes, the same announcement was made over the air. A free T-shirt and a dollar bill for every kid who went out to Kennedy Airport to see the Beatles land" (Norman 212). Television networks CBS and ABC ensured that the Beatles' arrival at the airport and their transfer to the Plaza Hotel was seen nationwide (curiously, NBC declined to cover the events at all).

Hirsch's assertion that "the best indicator of a record's potential for becoming a hit . . . is the amount of promotion it is allocated" (36) was as true in the 1960s as it is today. While one can point to occasional spectacular infringements of that general rule (Moby Grape in the United States, Sigue Sigue Sputnick in the UK) it has been confirmed many more times than it has been contradicted. In February 1964, "the Beatles were the most talked about phenomenon in America overnight" (Brown and Gaines 108). By the time of the group's first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, "I Want To Hold Your Hand" had sold more than 1.5 million copies and three production plants—Capitol's own, and the hastily-recruited facilities of CBS and RCA—were working round the clock to meet the continuing demand. Unprecedented promotion had brought about unprecedented success.

Conclusion

Interviewed by the *New Musical Express* in May 1963 during his UK tour with the Beatles, Roy Orbison had predicted: "These boys have

enough originality to storm our charts in the U.S. with the same effect as they have already done here . . . they have something that's entirely new . . . but it will need careful handling" (Hutchins 3). Together with the release of Del Shannon's U.S. cover version of "From Me To You" in June 1963, this was the first indication that American performers might be acquainted with the music of the Beatles.

Contact with American audiences was similarly slight. Walter Cronkite had included a brief report about Beatlemania in Britain on the *CBS Evening News* in early December; and on January 3, *The Jack Paar Program* on NBC had broadcast a two-minute film of the Beatles in concert in Britain. Both reports had treated the group and the response of its fans as a mildly amusing novelty item.

The reliance on the aftermath of the Kennedy assassination to explain the transition from the group's position as a minor object of passing interest to a nationwide phenomenon is a fine example of the dangers of reductionist argument. Singular explanations are attractive and convenient, and there is no doubt that the event did have profound implications across the political, cultural and intellectual landscapes of the United States. But to attribute to it sole or even major responsibility for the success of the Beatles, as many have tried to do, would be to wilfully deny the relevance of equally credible arguments. After all, in the six months that followed the assassination, a number of other memorable and controversial episodes were to take place: Cassius Clay's defeat of Sonny Liston in February marked his first steps on the path to becoming the century's most influential and celebrated sportsman; Malcolm X announced his departure from the Nation of Islam in March to found the Organization for Afro-American Unity; in April, Sidney Poitier's Oscar for his role in *Lilies of the Field* was the first time a Black actor had received the Academy Award for Best Actor; the Pulitzer Committee in May decided that there was no fiction, music, or drama worthy of its annual prize; Lenny Bruce was tried in New York for obscenity in June. Should we grant Kennedy's death responsibility for these incidents, too, simply because of their proximity?

In his biography of the Beatles, Norman has commented on the existence of "myths and rumours, multiplying stronger than ever around this scarcely-imaginable, true story" (xvi). Such myths are strengthened with every repetition, so that eventually they cease to be seen as conjecture and are instead accorded the status of historical fact. In the history of the Beatles, such facts are common.

For example, the reason behind Brian Epstein's initial desire to manage the Beatles is routinely presented as his homosexual crush on John Lennon. Brown and Gaines's typical reconstruction—"What on

earth did he want with them? In the deep core of his soul, only Brian knew the answer. He wanted John" (59)—has been unquestioningly reproduced in account after account (Connolly, Shotton and Schaffner, Goldman, Ryan, Norman).

Similarly, attempts to explain the musical supremacy of Liverpool over other provincial British cities have assumed the actions of the so-called Cunard Yanks—Liverpudlians employed on the then thriving transatlantic shipping links between Liverpool and New York—to be significant for the city's musical energy: "the Cunard Yanks brought home records not available in Britain . . . sung by still obscure names . . . [which] pounded through the terraced back streets each Saturday night" (Norman 38-39). It too has become a familar story in many narratives of the Beatles (Shotton and Schaffner, Goldman, Miles, Brown and Gaines).

What the examples of the Cunard Yanks and Brian Epstein's homosexuality indicate is that once a suitable explanation has been exposed and circulated—even though there may be little real evidence to support it—there is an unfortunate tendency to accept it absolutely and to disregard any other possible explanations. So it is with those versions of the Beatles' story which see a causal connection between their U.S. triumph and the death of Kennedy. To say that his assassination was entirely irrelevant to the group's reception would also be wrong; clearly, it signaled a transformation in the nation's political culture, and dominated many of the debates current in the United States during the early months of 1964. Yet it has been allowed to overshadow other compelling explanations. While it has been presented with conviction and largely accepted as the definitive factor in the American success of the Beatles it is, in the light of the theories reviewed above, perhaps best seen as incidental.

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CHAPTER NINE

"NOTHING YOU CAN SEE THAT ISN'T SHOWN":

THE ALBUM COVERS OF THE BEATLES

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'Nothing You Can See That Isn't Shown': the album covers of the Beatles

IAN INGLIS

Introduction

From their release in the 1960s, the LPs of the Beatles have dominated the various selections and lists which routinely purport to identify the most popular/most influential/best albums of the popular music era. Throughout each subsequent decade, the verdicts expressed in audience polls, in critics' choices and in the comments of other musicians have served to effectively maintain and enhance the group's reputation.

There is, however, an additional way – often alluded to, but rarely investigated – in which the albums of the Beatles are celebrated. Almost without exception, the album covers themselves have been seen as groundbreaking in their visual and aesthetic properties, have been congratulated for their innovative and imaginative designs, have been credited with providing an early impetus for the expansion of the graphic design industry into the imagery of popular music, and have been seen as largely responsible for allowing the connections between art and pop to be made explicit.

Now may be a particularly opportune moment to pursue in a little more depth these, and other related, issues. The nature of the relationship between popular music and its traditional visual conventions is ambiguous. On the one hand, the performance of much live music relies on the accompaniment of startling (and expensive) visual accessories. Performers such as the Rolling Stones, Michael Jackson, U2 and Madonna employ increasingly complex and ostentatious sets, costumes and special effects to enhance (some would say, to disguise) their music. On the other hand, the all but complete commercial replacement of the LP by the much smaller CD has led many to lament the decline, even the disappearance of album art: 'Just like the 78 rpm record, the record album became a relic of the past. The room for cover art was reduced from 12 to 5 inches while the price of albums almost doubled.' (Ochs 1996, p. 495)

By concentrating on the aesthetics of the Beatles' album covers, I hope to be able to offer some observations which may be applicable to an investigation of the dynamics of album art in general. At the same time, I believe that such an examination might allow an overdue reassessment of the revolutionary qualities they have long been reputed to possess. First, however, it is necessary to remind ourselves of what it is that album covers actually *do*.

The first and basic role of album covers has been to ensure the *protection* of the recording they contain. In the early years of the twentieth century, records were

distributed and sold with no packaging or with a paper sleeve. Cardboard began to replace paper in the 1930s, but the combination of a paper inner within a card sleeve was not achieved until Columbia's introduction of the long-playing record in 1948. With occasional variations – the gatefold sleeve, the boxed set – this has remained the standard form of packaging.

Secondly, album covers are an *advertisement* for the recordings they contain. In this, they reflect the conventions of other media forms, notably the news headline and/or lead, which act as an enticement to the reader to continue reading; and the magazine advertisement or television commercial, which similarly seek to attract and retain the consumer's attention.

Thirdly, album covers function as an *accompaniment* to the music. This may range from the inclusion of a simple photograph of the performer to which the listener may refer when playing the LP, to the reproduction of the album's lyrics which can be followed, studied and sung. In this way, the sleeve is not a superfluous thing to be discarded during the act of listening, but an integral component of the listening which assists and expands the musical experience.

Fourthly, there is an important sense in which an album sleeve can be seen as a *commodity* in its own right. Like other forms of commercial art – the poster, the print – the sleeve itself may be the object of purchase: 'For a fanatical few, the cover can be everything. "I may buy something purely on the cover," writes designer Neville Brody "and throw the record away".' (Sorger 1988, p. 56) Alternatively, sleeves may be coveted as trophies in a collection: Roger Dean, Stanley Mouse and Derek Riggs are among those designers whose work is increasingly sought out in this way by collectors.

The album covers of the Beatles

As the commercial success of the group extended from Britain around the world, the titles, contents and packaging of their album releases were adapted for the variety of markets in which they were promoted. In the UK the group released thirteen albums (on Parlophone and Apple) during their recording career from 1962 to 1970; by contrast, twenty-three albums were released in the US (on Vee Jay, Capitol, United Artists and Apple) over the same period. When that number is multiplied globally, increased by three decades of re-releases, compilations of old material and anthologies of 'new' material, distorted by an abundance of unofficial or bootleg recordings, and complicated by the occasional banned or withdrawn cover,[1] it quickly becomes apparent that there are, in fact, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Beatles album covers in existence.

I shall confine my discussion to the twelve original and official albums[2] released in the UK:

(1) *Please Please Me* (Parlophone), March 1963

(2) *With The Beatles* (Parlophone), November 1963

(3) *A Hard Day's Night* (Parlophone), July 1964

(4) *Beatles For Sale* (Parlophone), December 1964

(5) *Help!* (Parlophone), August 1965

(6) *Rubber Soul* (Parlophone), December 1965

(7) *Revolver* (Parlophone), August 1966

(8) *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Parlophone), June 1967

(9) *The Beatles* (Apple), November 1968

(10) *Yellow Submarine* (Apple), January 1969

(11) *Abbey Road* (Apple), September 1969

(12) *Let It Be* (Apple), May 1970

While other performers have released many more album titles (the Grateful Dead, the Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, David Bowie, Elton John), and in spite of the fact that there are a large number of other albums whose individual sales overshadow those achieved by any of the Beatles' LPs (*Saturday Night Fever*, Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, Carole King's *Tapestry*, Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and the Eagles' *Greatest Hits*), none have received the consistent and positive acclaim for their artwork enjoyed by the Beatles:

> Record sleeves . . . functioned as the visual signposts of the 'dynamic decade'. Periods and events between 1963 and 1970 can be recalled by reference to particular Beatles album covers, as clear a beacon as that of their actual music. The Beatles' album art – like their music – was highly innovative, setting the standards that others followed during the 60s and since. (Evans 1984A, p. 24).

Evaluations of this kind invite an examination of the group's album covers from three positions. The first is the assumption that the covers provided a physical link between the group's visual image and its recordings, which in some way reflected the Beatles' current musical and professional identity. The second is the claim that these covers became highly influential within the popular music community, and that ideas and styles derived from them were to be rapidly disseminated and imitated. The third is the proposition that the album covers themselves can be subjected to a textual analysis yielding rich insights into the ways in which they invite or allow the consumer to decipher them.

Image and identity

Angus McBean's photograph of the Beatles looking down the stairway at EMI House in Manchester Square, London, which was used as the cover for *Please Please Me*, locates the group precisely and predictably within the conventions of the British popular music industry in the early 1960s. It exemplifies what Thorgerson has called 'the personality cover' (Thorgerson 1989, p. 10). Identically dressed in suits and ties and smiling happily into the camera, they personify the contemporary pop star – bright, breezy, young and handsome. Following the traditions of the era, their two hit singles are named followed by the promise of 'twelve other songs'. In early 1963, of course, EMI was unaware that the Beatles were anything more than an attractive pop group with a Number One single – they were still unknown outside the UK, Beatlemania was yet to emerge, and their two significant television appearances of 1963 – on *Sunday Night At The London Palladium* in October and *The Royal Command Performance* in November – were months in the future.

But by the release of *With The Beatles*, these events, and others, had taken place, and distinct and recognisable images of the group had begun to coalesce around the identity of the Fab Four, Merseyside's moptops. Its cover, and those of the subsequent four albums, were photographed by Robert Freeman and served to

and life in a submarine, has led several critics to comment on the significant distance of *Revolver* from '... the conventions of commercialised pop music. Halfway between ritual and art, it's both verbally and musically an extraordinary breakthrough.' (Mellers 1973, p. 69) No less innovative is the album cover itself, which for the first time in the group's career, eschewed the conventions of the personality photograph(s) in favour of a montage of small photographs of the four Beatles variously peeping through larger line drawings of their heads. It was designed and drawn by artist and musician Klaus Voorman, whom the Beatles had first met during their performances in Hamburg in the early 1960s. The similarity of Hertsgaard's observation that the 'songs on *Revolver* were performed in ways that had never before been realised in pop music ... the lyrical sophistication of their songs also reached new heights' (Hertsgaard 1995, p. 176) and Evans' assertion that its cover 'was far removed from anything the Beatles – or any other recording artists – had attempted before' (Evans 1984A, p. 28) does support the view that with this, their seventh album, the Beatles had achieved a remarkable visual–musical correspondence. The discongruities and idiosyncrasies of the cover in which the (unnamed) Beatles reject any notions of uniformity (of location, pose or activity) were a preparation for the varieties and innovations of the music inside it.

Please Please Me had been recorded in early 1963 in one day at a cost of £400. By contrast, *Sgt Pepper* took more than seven hundred hours to record before its release in 1967 and cost £25,000. The cover design alone cost more than £1500. Almost everything about the project indicated the ease with which the Beatles felt able to develop the initiatives of *Revolver* in both musical and design terms. It was the first record not to be banded into individual tracks. It was the first album whose inner sleeve was not just a white paper envelope but part of the overall package design. It was the first record to have the song lyrics printed in full on the rear of the album cover. It was the first album to contain an additional cardboard sheet of cut-out memorabilia. It also, incidentally, contained the first Beatles song to be banned by the BBC – 'A Day In The Life'.

Reactions to its release showed that the Beatles had promoted the cultural significance of popular music to a level unimaginable at the start of the decade. Kenneth Tynan claimed that the record represented 'a decisive moment in the history of Western civilisation' (Dowlding 1989, p. 161). Timothy Leary believed that it compressed 'the evolutionary development of musicology and much of the history of Eastern and Western sound in a new tympanic complexity' (Dowlding 1989, p. 162). Mellers has judged that it marked 'the climacteric point in the Beatles' career, their definite break with the pop music industry ... henceforth the world they've created is *sui generis*, bringing in its own criteria' (Mellers 1973, p. 101). And MacDonald has suggested that 'the psychic shiver which *Sgt Pepper* sent through the world was nothing less than a cinematic dissolve from one *Zeitgeist* to another' (MacDonald 1995, p. 198). The majority of these, and many similar, comments are responses to the music of *Sgt Pepper*. Countless interviews, numerous articles and several books[3] have devoted themselves to examinations of the bewildering variety of styles, themes and vocabularies that characterise what is arguably the most celebrated album in the history of post-war popular music (a word which recurs in many of these accounts is 'kaleidoscopic').

No less significant has been the attention paid to its cover, whose extravagance and complexity amply and consciously reflect its music. 'The Beatles and their entourage took exceptional pains to create for the *Sgt Pepper* jacket a collage as

colorful, imaginative and intriguing as the record itself' (Schaffner 1977, p. 81). As the Beatles reinvent and introduce themselves on the album's opening track not as the Beatles now, but as the members of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, so too the cover confirms the new identities. Surrounded by an audience of around sixty of the group's friends, heroes and mentors (including the early Beatles themselves), wearing the satin military style uniforms of a Northern brass band, holding brass and wind instruments in place of guitars, and posed behind a bass drum on which the new band's name is proudly displayed, the Beatles are encouraging us to re-evaluate our assumptions about who they are. But in fact there is a surfeit of visual clues – the references to competitor–colleagues Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones, a portable television, flowers that spell the word 'Beatles' on what appears to be a fresh grave, a row of marijuana plants, the threefold presence of child star Shirley Temple, a figure of an Indian goddess – whose impulse is amplified when the graphic design of the cover is assessed in conjunction with the musical design of the record, '... among the most varied collections of songs anyone had ever pieced together, a crazy quilt of rock 'n' roll, sound effects, electronic noodling, and Indian, folk, baroque, classical, and music-hall influences' (Schaffner 1977, p. 77). The cover was designed by Peter Blake and Jann Haworth, and photographed by Michael Cooper. Their involvement left little doubt that 'Beatles album sleeves, in the mind of the group itself, as much as in the opinion of ... fans and critics, had assumed the status of Works of Art.' (Evans 1984B, p. 96) Producer George Martin believes that it accomplished its task precisely and efficiently: 'their artwork on the sleeve complements the music inside it perfectly; both are types of collage' (Martin 1994, p. 116).

By the appearance of the group's next album some sixteen months later, three events had impacted upon the trajectory of the Beatles' career. The first was the death, in August 1967, of their manager Brian Epstein; the second was their introduction to and increasing immersion in the doctrine of Transcendental Meditation practised by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, which culminated in their visit to Rishikesh, India, in the Spring of 1968; the third was the inauguration, in January 1968, of their own management and recording company, named Apple Corps Ltd. Released in November 1968, the group's only double album, *The Beatles*, has continued to meet with critical confusion. Some have hailed it as another masterpiece, pointing to its 'remarkable richness of invention and variety of mood' (Mellers 1973, p. 125), while others see it as disappointing and mediocre, believing that 'half the tracks on it are poor by earlier standards ... many of its lyrics are little more than the lazy navel-gazing of pampered recluses' (MacDonald 1995, p. 261). Many of the tracks were written during the group's stay in Rishikesh, and betray all too clearly the varying degrees of (dis)satisfaction the four Beatles experienced at the time, as first Ringo Starr, then Paul McCartney, finally John Lennon and George Harrison, returned to Britain to engage in a number of individual projects in the early and middle months of 1968. It is not surprising then, that 'there is little in this collection of songs to suggest either literary or musical unity ... the album fails to demonstrate any particular theme or conceptual reference point' (O'Grady 1983, p. 150). In fact Lennon himself has confirmed that the initial signs of the Beatles' eventual break-up were in their preoccupation with individual musical ambitions at the time of this album. 'We made the double album, the set ... it was just me and a backing group, Paul and a backing group, and I enjoyed it. We broke up then.' (Miles 1980, p. 69)

If the design of any album cover should reflect the music it contains and evoke the intention of the performers, the strategy employed to illuminate and accompany two LPs, by four *de facto* soloists, whose musical contents encompassed rock 'n' roll, doo-wop, blues, folk, rock, country, pop, psychedelia, avant-garde and music-hall, was deceptively simple. Richard Hamilton, one of the earliest exponents of Pop Art, was recruited as designer for the double album. He proposed a blank white cover, subtly embossed with the words 'The Beatles', indicating both performers and title, which could be embellished by the inclusion of photographs and prints inside, and a unique 'limited edition' number on the outside; eventually the first two million copies to be pressed bore their own serial number. It did, however, also possess a powerful commercial rationale: 'It was a very radical way to package the album. Richard Hamilton saw it, not as an art statement, but as a way of competing with the lavish design treatments of most post-*Sgt Pepper* sleeves.' (Miles 1997, p. 502) And by curtailing the conventions of the album sleeve to the most extreme of minimalist concepts, the design – in contrast to *Sgt Pepper* – provides no clues to the nature of the complex and unpredictable correspondences (if any) between performers and music, between the Beatles and *The Beatles*. For the only time in their career, there is no place for the group (in whatever form) on the album front. In saying nothing, the cover says everything.

Although the group's third film, the full-length cartoon *Yellow Submarine*, was released in July 1968, the soundtrack album, containing only four new songs, did not appear until January 1969. The delay was mainly to allow Apple to concentrate on the promotion of *The Beatles* – uniquely, the rear of the *Yellow Submarine* cover said nothing about its own record, choosing instead to reproduce Tony Palmer's review of *The Beatles* that had appeared in *The Observer*. But it also reflected the overall lack of involvement and attention given by the Beatles to the project. The movie had been demanded by United Artists (the producers of *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*) whose contractual arrangements with the group had stipulated three films: 'Both the Beatles and Brian [Epstein] treated it as a throwaway, a means of fulfilling their obligation to provide United Artists with a third film.' (McCabe and Schonfield 1972, p. 105) The Beatles' voices were dubbed by actors, and for the first time in its career the group had little or no control over the imagery and identities constructed for them: 'the contribution of "the Beatles" was limited to the four contractually enforced original songs, a few minor script ideas, and a brief appearance at the film's closure' (Neaverson 1997, p. 83). The album was completed by the inclusion of a couple of previously released songs – including 'Yellow Submarine' – and the original film score, composed and orchestrated by George Martin. Disowned by the Beatles themselves and generally regarded as the weakest of their albums (Dowlding 1989, p. 210), its music fails to match the psychedelia and extravagance of the post-*Sgt Pepper* cartoon caricatures the movie depicts. Instead, the colourful graphics and characterisations, designed by Heinz Edelmann, which adorn the cover are in sharp contrast to the hastily assembled music of the record itself.

The lack of title and the absence of the group's name on the cover of *Abbey Road* (which was the last album the group recorded, although its release came before *Let It Be*) can be seen to serve a specific purpose. The photograph, by Iain MacMillan, of the group confidently striding across the zebra crossing was an 'uncomplicated acknowledgement of the scene of their greatest artistic achievements, the Abbey Road EMI recording studio' (Evans 1984B, p. 100). Led, appropri-

ately, by John Lennon whose Quarrymen skiffle group, formed in March 1957, had eventually evolved into the Beatles, the presence of the group provides a visual signature which permanently and officially links its music with the location in which it was produced. Unlike many of their contemporaries in the 1960s, such as the Rolling Stones, who used a variety of studios in the UK and US in their attempts to create particular sounds,[4] the Beatles had seen little need to go beyond the familiarity of Abbey Road and George Martin. *Abbey Road*'s combination of the traditional conventions of pop (the love songs, ballads and rock 'n' roll of Side One, in which all four Beatles are present as composers and vocalists) with the innovative and unexpected aesthetics of rock (the fifteen-minute suite of songs on Side Two) is ideally complemented by the cover's image of four independent young men who must remain inevitably connected to the end: 'the *Abbey Road* album seems to sum up all the reasons why the Beatles became the most popular and accomplished musical force of their time' (Hertsgaard 1995, p. 304).

Let It Be was intended to be the soundtrack album to accompany a film documentary about the Beatles at work in the recording studio. Although filming was concluded in January 1969, the movie and the album did not appear until May of the following year, as a result of the group's disillusionment with the project. Recorded in (and on the roof of) the newly built Apple Studios in Savile Row, rather than Abbey Road, the music (and the movie) reveal the lack of unity or optimism within the group. As the tapes were passed from George Martin to Glyn Johns to Phil Spector in an attempt to improve their quality, the Beatles 'were horrified at how ragged and thin it sounded. They were also sick of it.' (Miles 1997, pp. 549–50) Lennon gave guarded approval of Spector's contribution to the eventual release: 'he was given the shittiest load of badly recorded shit with a lousy feeling to it ever, and he made something out of it' (Wenner 1971, p. 120). But this opinion was not shared by McCartney who complained bitterly about Spector's embellishments, which included '... harps, horns, an orchestra and women's choir added. No one had asked me what I thought. I couldn't believe it. I would never have female voices on a Beatles record.' (Miles 1997, p. 575)

Given the acrimony that the album created within the group, it is, perhaps, entirely appropriate that the four Beatles, again unnamed, appear separately on its cover. Four separate portraits (photographed by Ethan Russell), bordered in black, present the Beatles unequivocally as four separate individuals, with separate opinions, ambitions and trajectories. Made somewhat more attractive by the inclusion of a glossy book of photographs in the boxed set, which was designed by John Kosh, nevertheless 'many record reviewers saw his black sombre design as a fitting choice for the last Beatles' album' (Stannard 1982, p. 91).

Impacts and influences

George Martin's assertion that 'the art of the vinyl album sleeve ... did not have much of a life before the Beatles' (Martin 1994, p. 121) has been echoed by many commentators who are keen to credit the group with initiating the explosion of innovative album design which characterised the mid and late 1960s. Evans (1984A) has suggested that, with the exception of the cover of *Please Please Me*, which followed the conventional 'personality' pose of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the album covers fall into three distinct groups, whose designs reflect the intentions of promotion (*With The Beatles* to *Rubber Soul*), art (*Revolver* to *The Beatles*) and music

(*Abbey Road* to *Let It Be*); he excludes *Yellow Submarine* from his analysis, although chronologically and stylistically it would seem to belong in the second categorisation.

Described as 'one of the most familiar – if not *the* most familiar – images in Beatles iconography' (Evans 1984B, p. 41), Robert Freeman's photograph for *With The Beatles* quickly persuaded a number of young British groups caught up in the turbulence of Beatlemania to mimic the unsmiling half-lit pose adopted by the group. Albums such as Them's *Angry Young Them*, The Kink's *Kinks*, and the Rolling Stones' *The Rolling Stones* were early imitators of a style continued through to the 1980s and 1990s by, for example, Phil Collins' *No Jacket Required* and Lou Reed & John Cale's *Songs For Drella*.

Despite EMI's preference for a colour portrait for *With The Beatles*, the photographer won the support of Brian Epstein, George Martin and the Beatles themselves: 'Black-and-white photographs had been used for jazz album covers, whose standards of design were consistently high, but it was the first time, to my knowledge, that a black-and-white photograph had been used on an LP cover for popular musicians.' (Freeman 1996, p. 9)

The use of side-lit photography was continued in the selection of twenty black-and-white 'film strip' snaps of the four Beatles for the cover of *A Hard Day's Night*. By visually signalling the relationship between movie and album in this way, the traditional necessity to use the sleeve as an advertisement for the movie rather than for the record was overcome. It was, however, not an entirely new device; the album cover for Elvis Presley's *Blue Hawaii*, for example, had made use of a similar film-strip approach on both front and rear, albeit in a less dramatic way. Like *With The Beatles*, the design of *A Hard Day's Night* has continued to attract imitations and parodies in the decades since it appeared. John Cale's *The Academy In Peril*, the Rolling Stones' *Some Girls*, the Bangles' *Different Light* and the Super Furry Animals' *Fuzzy Logic* are all albums whose lineage stems directly from the cover of *A Hard Day's Night*.

The portrait of the group on the cover of *Beatles For Sale* was the first colour photograph Robert Freeman had taken of the Beatles, and evokes the image of *With The Beatles* in its directness. It provides an exemplification of Sontag's observation that 'in its simplest form, we have in a photograph surrogate possession of a cherished person or thing' (Sontag 1978, p. 120). It is that possession or ownership which this sequence of album covers accomplishes. When we purchase the record in its cover, we simultaneously purchase the Beatles themselves; when we play the record and/or examine the cover, we consume our purchase; when we file the record away in our record collections, we confim that the product is now uniquely ours. In this respect the title and design of *Beatles For Sale* represent a remarkably astute insight into the nature of the relationship between the group and its fans.

The standard close-up portrait of head-and-shoulders utilised on the covers of the group's first four albums was sacrificed for the design of *Help!* On this occasion, the four group members were presented as full-length figures, set back a considerable way from the camera, whose dark snow-gear was starkly contrasted against an all-white background. It freely recalled the multiple portraits of the full-length, gold lame-suited Elvis Presley from the cover of *Elvis' Gold Records Volume 2*. The organisation of the group's image was simple enough, as Freeman has explained: 'For the design of the album cover I had the Beatles signalling in semaphore the word HELP!' (Freeman 1996, p. 15). Evans describes how 'the semaphore

Help . . . became another trademark, another symbol that made them instantly identifiable . . . even at a distance' (Evans 1984A, p. 27). In fact, the semaphore positions adopted by the Beatles spell out the letters NUJV. Linguistically meaningless, but visually attractive, the distortion of reality and manipulation of imagery presented by the Beatles on the cover of *Help!* was a demonstration of the argument that 'the function of advertising is to create images that sell products . . . and there is therefore no need for it to adhere to truth' (Gordon and Kittross 1999, p. 240).

The design for *Rubber Soul* has been described as the cover that 'effected quite a revolution in album artwork, which had heretofore been as cheap and unimaginatively garish as that on noodle boxes' (Schaffner 1977, p. 49). Most striking was the pre-psychedelic typography which 'heralded a style that was to become the *de rigeur* of the poster art of the flower power subculture which blossomed on America's West Coast in 1966' (Evans 1984B, p. 60) and which directly influenced the output of graphic designers like Wes Wilson, Alton Kelley and Victor Moscoso. An equally tangible impact was to be seen in the number of covers which seemed to draw directly from *Rubber Soul*'s photography, both in terms of the dominant colours, background and stance of the performer (for example, Bob Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde* and Count Five's *Psychotic Reaction*), and also in their use of the fisheye lens which mimicked the image distortion of the Beatles (such as Captain Beefheart's *Safe As Milk* and the Rolling Stones' *Big Hits, High Tide And Green Grass*).

Klaus Voorman's design and artwork for *Revolver* won the Grammy award for the best album cover of 1966. While it reflected the revival of interest in the Victorian illustrator Aubrey Beardsley,[5] whose elegant, black-and-white line drawings were enthusiastically imitated by cartoonists, advertisers and designers, it boldly transferred their whimsical, exotic qualities to the more vibrant environment of mid-1960s rock: 'Its cover, amid its rivals' Carnaby colours, was plain black and white. Who else in the world would announce themselves in graphics reflecting the smartest magazines? Who else but the Beatles would have confidence colossal enough to be so chastely downbeat?' (Norman 1981, pp. 262–3)

The cover for *Sgt Pepper*, which won the Grammy award for the best album cover of 1967, is undoubtedly the most celebrated that popular music has yet produced. Weaving together images from psychedelia, nostalgia, the fairy-tale, the fairground and popular culture, it was the first cover to specifically offer itself as an object for overt investigation and analysis; identifying the figures (who included Aubrey Beardsley, as well as contemporary American artists Simon Rodia, Richard Merkin, Wallace Borman, Richard Lindner and Larry Bell) featured in the tableau became a popular game and an intellectual exercise. And in 1999, the BBC placed the album cover in its Arena Top Twenty list of British twentieth century masterpieces of art and design – ahead of such national icons as Mary Quant's mini skirt, Sir Gilbert Scott's red telephone box, and Sir Alec Issigonis's Mini car.

Like many Beatles albums, the cover continues to attract parody and pastiche, most famously from the Mothers Of Invention's *We're Only In It For The Money*. It also fostered a series of weak imitations, notably the Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (also photographed, like *Sgt Pepper*, by Michael Cooper). In fact, the group's regular and unacknowledged plagiarism of the Beatles' output over the years frustrated John Lennon: 'I would just like to list what we did and what the Stones did two months after, on every fucking album and every fucking thing we did . . . you know *Satanic Majesties* is *Pepper* . . . I resent the implication that the Stones are like revolutionaries and that the Beatles weren't . . . they are not in the

same class, music-wise or power-wise.' (Wenner 1971, pp. 90–1) In addition, the planned but unfulfilled involvement of Dutch design team The Fool in the *Sgt Pepper* project (they were to have designed the centrefold spread) led to their actual involvement in the creation of a number of other album sleeves (such as The Incredible String Band's *5000 Spirits*). And their adventurous and elaborate Indian-influenced designs were, in turn, to exert an influence on the covers of many more LPs of the late 1960s, including Cream's *Disraeli Gears* and The Jimi Hendrix Experience's *Axis: Bold As Love.*

In the same manner that *Sgt Pepper* had introduced unsuspected complexities into the aesthetics of album cover design, *The Beatles* reacted against the trend its predecessor had instigated by reverting to a uniquely minimalist design; to this day, the album is conventionally referred to as the *White Album*. The flamboyance, diversity, and visual excess typified by *Sgt Pepper* continued to be the chief signatures of album art through the late 1960s and early 1970s: 'album cover design plundered whatever was necessary in order to approximate to an experience that the music was trying to embody' (Thorgerson 1989, p. 95). In contrast, the design of *The Beatles* remained an exceptional, if startling, alternative to the lustrous and decorative colours of psychedelia.

The most lasting impact of *Yellow Submarine*, whose cartoon depictions of the Beatles in Pepperland act as a compendium of visual styles of the late 1960s – op art, pop art, art nouveau, psychedelia, surrealism – lies not in any direct influences it may have had over album art generally, but in its significance for the merchandising and memorabilia sectors of the popular music industry. Toys, games, jigsaw puzzles, souvenir books, watches, costumes, bedclothes, greetings cards, lampshades, lunch boxes and crockery were among the dozens of associated products marketed to coincide with the release of the album and the movie. This second wave of Beatle-related merchandising, four years after the wave that accompanied their initial US success, was the final substantial marketing of the group as a product; it 'updated the moptop image of the 1964 versions with a dash of the trendy psychedelia as exemplified by the film itself' (Schaffner 1977, p. 100). Together they created a template which has been periodically employed to maximise commercial returns within the entertainment industry; the most notable beneficiaries may well be the Spice Girls of 1996–8.

This said, it is also undeniable that in the period immediately after the release of *Yellow Submarine*, there was a distinct growth in the number of albums which featured cartoon covers. Cat Stevens' *Teaser And The Firecat*, the Flamin' Groovies' *Supersnazz* and the Move's *Shazam* may well have been encouraged in their use of what was previously a relatively neglected area of album art by the example of the Beatles. In fact, throughout the practices of the entertainment media, a new subculture of 'animatophilia' was ushered in by the success of *Yellow Submarine*; as Neaverson (1997, p. 122) has noted, the consequences of its rediscovery of the art and possibilities of animation have continued into the 1990s.

Abbey Road is perhaps unique among Beatles album covers in its presentation of an unremarkable, even banal image, which has nonetheless become as potent a symbol of the group as any of its other images. Compared with the painstaking research and preparation required for *Sgt Pepper*, the cover's creation, by Iain MacMillan, could not have been easier: 'MacMillan set up his camera in the middle of Abbey Road, right outside the studios, and while the police stopped traffic the Beatles walked across the road three or four times.' (Fawcett 1976, p. 84) Pre-

dictably, the shot of the four Beatles on the zebra crossing has produced its parodies, such as the Red Hot Chilli Peppers' *The Abbey Road EP* and New York City's *Soulful Road*. Far less predictable, however, was the version by Booker T and the MGs of the entire *Abbey Road* album – music and sleeve: *McLemore Avenue* was named after the Memphis street in which it was recorded, and its cover shows the group walking across the avenue which gave their LP its title.

The *Abbey Road* cover also served to fuel the rumour current in 1969 that Paul McCartney was no longer alive, by allegedly providing clues to his death (Patterson 1996); in fact McCartney himself was to provide a pastiche of the cover for his own album *Paul Is Live*. And, of course, the album can also be credited for introducing the practice of naming an LP after a significant address: Eric Clapton's *461 Ocean Boulevard*, Paul Weller's *Stanley Road*, and John Lennon's *Menlove Avenue* are familiar examples.

After the impressive and influential innovations of their previous album covers, the cover for *Let It Be* returned, rather despondently, to the conventions of the 'personality' pose of their very earliest LPs. Evans' observation that 'design-wise, the cover had little to offer' (Evans 1984B, p. 102) is a charitable assessment of a cover which would not have been out of place in record racks a decade earlier.

Readerly and writerly texts

In his discussion of the insights offered by Barthes (1975) into the interpretation of texts, Fiske has pointed to the essential differences between the 'readerly text [which] invites an essentially passive, receptive, disciplined reader who tends to accept its meanings as already made . . . [and] . . . the writerly text, which challenges the reader constantly to rewrite it, to make sense out of it' (Fiske 1989, p. 103). The former can be characterised as a closed text, where meaning is intrinsic, easily accessible and which contains little or no room for dispute. The latter is a (more difficult) open text which requires the reader's involvement in the negotiation of meaning(s).

However, the construction and assignment of meaning may take time, and is contingent on any number of emotional, material, experiential and intellectual conditions. The belief that any text possesses a single absolute meaning is difficult to sustain, since such a claim rests on the assumptions that the text contains a deliberate message, which is decoded by the reader in the way it was encoded by the producer, and which is accepted uncritically. Nonetheless, the attempt to *suggest* if not to *specify* meaning is very necessary to the practice of informative advertising, which aims to eliminate confusion and provide exact information. Within the highly competitive world of popular music, in which (certainly in the 1960s) success is largely equated with record sales, there is thus a commercial imperative to diminish the potential consumer's scope for uncertainty at the point of transaction by emphasising as clearly as possible the nature of the commodity on sale. For the sale of albums, the easiest ways to accomplish this are to frankly present the name of the performers, their likeness (usually a photograph), and the title of the LP. This is the strategy adopted by the Beatles.

The name of the group appears on eight of their twelve albums; when it is absent (*Rubber Soul, Revolver, Abbey Road* and *Let It Be*) their photographs are there to confirm their identity. Their photographs (in one case, a cartoon depiction) are

on eleven of the twelve covers; when they are missing (*The Beatles*) the album's title and the group's name simultaneously appear to offer reassurance. The title is also to be found on eleven covers; on the one occasion when it is absent (*Abbey Road*) there is a photograph of the Beatles in Abbey Road itself. In this sense, the album covers of the Beatles allow little possibility for alternative readings. They ask nothing of the reader. Each cover is absolutely and uniquely what it appears – the cover of a new, named album by the Beatles. Even *Sgt Pepper* rigorously adheres to these rules; in fact, by presenting *two* versions of the Beatles (one in military costume, one in suits) plus its prominent display of the group's name and the album's title, the cover emphatically signals what is on offer. Similarly, the all-white cover of *The Beatles* does not invite interpretation but restricts it, since the only visible words are, explicitly, 'the Beatles'.

The album covers of the Beatles thus exemplify the readerly text. Through their direct identification of the performers, consistent reproduction of their likeness and clear display of the LP's title, the covers achieve closure; there is nothing else that these texts can possibly be other than the covers of specific albums, created at specific times, by the Beatles. That they are colourful, inventive, unusual or provocative does not detract from this basic characteristic. As texts, they are in sharp contrast to those produced by, for example, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, groups who have released several albums whose sleeves have dispensed with name, likeness and title. Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon, Atom Heart Mother, Meddle, Wish You Were Here* and Led Zeppelin's *Houses Of The Holy, Untitled/Four Symbols* and *Presence* typify the writerly text; they contain no reference to the group or to the album title, and the images have no musical relevance. They generate multiple meanings and, in so doing, free the reader from the tyranny of imposed definition. All interpretations are left open; these texts could be anything – including album covers, but excluding nothing.

Although it has been argued that 'words, comparisons, signs need to create a context for a printed photograph ... they must mark and leave open diverse approaches' (Berger 1980, p. 63), the words and signs on the album covers of the Beatles achieve the opposite effect. Partly because of the universal familiarity of the images of the four Beatles (there can be no speculation about their identity) and partly because of the straightforward announcement of their contents (repetition of name and title) the group's album covers served the function of 'transparent wrappers'. That they should remain so during a period in which 'enigmatic images replaced the informative and documentary nature of the usual photographic album cover' (Sorger 1988, p. 18) is quite remarkable. It may be ironic that the group praised more than any other for its daring should, in this particular facet of its career at least, demonstrate its affinity with the routine and the popular, rather than the avant garde with which it has so often been linked.

Conclusion

Commerce and technology have played significant roles in the history of album cover art. Its birth was assisted by the postwar reorganisation of record retailing (coinciding with the emergence of rock 'n' roll) which introduced self-service record racks through which the consumer could browse; they 'brought the cover face to face with the customer ... slowly the importance of the cover as a 'silent salesman' was noticed by the record companies and their marketing personnel' (Sorger 1988,

p. 11). Its death was provoked, some four decades later by Philips' introduction of the CD, after which the creative significance and budgetary allocation given to cover design was severely curtailed.

The album cover might therefore be approached as a historical relic whose chronology can be precisely located, in much the same way as other ancient artefacts, such as the chronometer, the Davy Lamp, or the flintlock musket. But whereas the creation of those objects stemmed from the recognition of certain needs and the attempts to resolve those needs, the commercial world inhabited by the designers of album covers stresses not needs, but desires – the desire of the producer to sell, the desire of the purchaser to consume. And 'what characterises the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images and no longer, like those of the past, beliefs' (Barthes 1981, pp. 118–19). The issues raised by an examination of the particular imagery of album covers have, therefore, much wider relevance than the specific position they occupy within popular music.

By concentrating on the album covers of the Beatles, whose images will be familiar to almost all, I have attempted to illustrate the success they achieved in linking the visual image of the group with its current musical output. In addition, I have indicated some of the enduring ways in which their innovative design and imagery were to impact on the popular music community. And I have also suggested that, notwithstanding these considerable achievements, they remain fundamentally conservative texts which reflect a set of commercially driven and relatively inflexible assumptions and practices. In view of the group's ability to confront and dismantle many of the restrictive structures and cultures of the popular music industry throughout its career, it is perhaps surprising that, in this case, the Beatles should demur from the opportunity for challenge, and consent instead to a policy of innovation within predictability.

Endnotes

1. Notably the notorious 'Butcher' cover, originally intended as the album sleeve for *Yesterday And Today*, released in the US in June 1966.
2. Excluding the compilation, *A Collection Of Beatles Oldies But Goldies*, released in the UK in December 1966.
3. See, for example, Harry (1989), Martin (1994) and Moore (1997).
4. The eight albums released by the Rolling Stones in the 1960s – from *The Rolling Stones* (April 1964) to *Let It Bleed* (December 1969) – utilised various producers (Andrew Loog Oldham, Glyn Johns, Jimmy Miller) and different studios (Regent Sound in London, RCA Studios in Hollywood, Chess Studios in Chicago, Olympic Studios in London).
5. An exhibition of Beardsley's work at London's Victoria & Albert Museum had drawn huge crowds in the Summer of 1966.

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CHAPTER TEN

FROM FAB TO FANTASY:

THE ROOTS AND ROUTES OF THE CARTOON BEATLES

Ian Inglis

From Fab to Fantasy: the Roots and Routes of the Cartoon Beatles

Since their international emergence in 1963–64, the professional achievements (and personal lives) of the Beatles have been subjected to constant measurement and analysis. Estimated sales of more than a billion records, tapes and compact discs since the 1960s have, in recent years, been consolidated by sales of 'new' recordings – especially of the singles *Free As A Bird* (1995) and *Real Love* (1996), which allowed the surviving Beatles to add their vocal and instrumental contributions to old demo tapes of John Lennon and which ensured that the group has retained its position as the single most successful performers of popular music.

Freshly edited versions of the films *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Help!* (1965) and (the heavily-merchandized) *Yellow Submarine* (1968) re-issued through the 1990s, accompanied by video releases, have helped to sustain and generate interest in the Beatles' movies, to the extent that there is now a growing literature of academic or historical accounts of their career in film.[1] In passing, it is revealing to note that the title of a biography of Richard Lester, who directed *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*, sought to draw attention to itself by exploiting and emphasizing his involvement with the group – *The Man who 'Framed' The Beatles*.[2]

Their radio output too – in all, the group featured in approximately 130 UK programmes from 1962 to 1970 – has provoked similar levels of activity.[3] Several dozen songs recorded by the group for BBC broadcasts and originally transmitted more than 30 years ago were included on the albums *The Beatles Live at the BBC* (1994) and *The Beatles Anthology I* (1995); the BBC Radio 2 weekly show *Sounds of the Sixties* has, during 1999 to 2001, featured an 'A to Z of The Beatles' segment in which the group's comments, gleaned from four decades of radio interviews, have been used to illuminate the circumstances of specific songs; and their radio career has also been examined in a number of documentary books.[4]

In the light of these observations, it is somewhat surprising that there remains one component of the group's biography to have largely evaded any sustained investigation – their television output. From October 1962 to April 1970 the Beatles, individually or collectively, made more than 120 television appearances (excluding news coverage and promotional films) in the UK alone.[5] It was a relationship of general and reciprocal gain. Hampered by their inability to respond to even a tiny fraction of the requests or opportunities which would allow them to interact with fans through traditional live performances and concerts, the Beatles, like others, relied on the national and global exposure which television could provide. In return, television

welcomed the guaranteed audiences that accompanied each of their appearances. But there is one specific facet of their television career that has been almost completely neglected: 'at the height of Beatlemania ... the marketing of the Fab Four took an unusual twist ... all but forgotten except by die-hard Beatles fans for many years'.[6]

Thirty-nine episodes of *The Beatles* cartoon series, produced by King Features and networked on US television by ABC, were broadcast over three seasons in the Autumn schedules of 1965, 1966 and 1967. That their significance continues to be overlooked is remarkable: the cartoons were an important part of the overall strategy to pursue maximum exposure for the group in the most lucrative segment of the worldwide popular music market. In its (stereo)typical characterizations of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr the series employed and confirmed the visual and behavioural dynamics of the four individual personae around which so much of the group's collective public attraction was based. It was the first occasion in television history where real entertainers were portrayed as animated characters. As the first example of a cartoon version of rock'n'roll, it provided a template for subsequent animated series and live action derivatives, and anticipated by some four years the cinematic success of *Yellow Submarine*, also produced by King Features, which utilized many of the series' devices and talents.

For all these reasons, it seems appropriate to explore the history of *The Beatles* cartoon series, to consider why it has been persistently ignored by biographers of the group, and to re-assess its importance in the story of the Beatles.

'With A Little Help From My Friends': the evolution of the series

In 1964, during the Beatles' first US tour, the group's manager, Brian Epstein, was contacted by Al Brodax, Head of the TV & Motion Picture Department at King Features. Brodax had enjoyed considerable success as a producer of such cartoons as *Beetle Bailey*, *Krazy Kat* and *Popeye*, and saw the Beatles as ideal subjects for an animated series. Although initially unenthusiastic about the potential trivialization of the group as cartoon characters, Epstein eventually agreed to Brodax's proposals. On 11 November 1964 it was formally announced that King Features had been licensed to produce a series of half-hour programmes for prime-time evening broadcast to commence the following year. Epstein and the Beatles were to receive 50 per cent of the profits.

By the time of transmission, the scheduling had been revised to a daytime slot. The series premiered on ABC on Saturday 25 September 1965 at 10.30 a.m., immediately picking up an impressive 52 per cent share of the audience. Thirty-nine original episodes were produced and broadcast over the next three years, all following the same pattern. Opening credits (to the soundtrack of *Can't Buy Me Love* in the first series, *Help!* in the second and *And Your Bird Can Sing* in the third) were followed by two separate 5–6 minute cartoons whose stories were (loosely) inspired by and performed to a specific song. Thus, for example, episode one featured *A Hard Day's Night*, in which the

group, frustrated at their inability to rehearse undisturbed, eventually find themselves in a Transylvanian castle, and *I Want To Hold Your Hand*, in which their flight from fans takes them beneath the ocean where they encounter an amorous octopus. In episode nine, *Little Child* finds the Beatles kidnapped by a North American Indian girl, and *I'll Be Back* relates the group's attempts to retrieve a golden guitar before performing in concert. The two cartoons were separated by a 'singalong' segment during which the lyrics of two Beatles songs appeared on screen to accompany the relevant soundtracks. The first season contained 26 such episodes; the second featured 7 new episodes plus 19 repeats; the third season 6 new episodes plus 20 repeats.

The scriptwriters for each episode were Dennis Marks, Jack Mendelsohn, Woody Kling and Bruce Howard although, as Supervising Director Jack Stokes confirmed, the construction of dialogue and plot was a relatively minor consideration: 'As far as I'm concerned, the sponsors paid for the Beatle tracks and the kids want to hear them, so anything else must suffer before the music.'[7] The cartoons themselves were produced by TVC in London, who subsequently subcontracted some of the work to Artransa in Sydney, Canawest in Vancouver and TVC's Dutch subsidiary, Cine Cartoon Centrum in Hilversum. The series featured just two regular cast members – British actor/comedian Lance Percival who supplied the voices of Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, and US radio/television actor Paul Frees who performed those of John Lennon and George Harrison. Each actor recorded his contributions – in an overtly mid-Atlanticized accent – in his own country, to be edited together later.

ABC moved the 1968 reruns to 9.30 a.m. on Sundays, where they remained until the network's final transmission on 7 September 1969. After that, the series went into syndication although, to this day, they have been broadcast by very few stations and these chiefly in the US. WNEW-TV (New York), KPLR-TV (St Louis) and WATL-TV (Atlanta) screened the series in the 1970s, as did KCOP-TV (Los Angeles) in the 1980s. The other chief location for the series has been Australia: GTV 9 (Melbourne) in the 1970s, ATV 10 (Melbourne) and Southern Cross Channel 8 (Traralgon) in the 1980s. Surprisingly, the cartoons have only been broadcast locally in Britain – in the 1970s by Granada, whose region includes the Beatles' home city of Liverpool, and in the 1980s by LWT in London. In the 1990s, the major outlet for the series has been on MTV in North America.

The Beatles' attitude towards creative control of their career was to change markedly in later years, but at the time that the cartoon series was produced, and in the midst of a particularly hectic period of their professional lives (from January 1963 to August 1966, they performed some 500 live concerts around the world, recorded and released twelve singles and seven albums, and appeared in two full-length movies), the lack of any direct input into the project was particularly tempting to the group and its management, as has been readily acknowledged by Brodax: 'The thing that attracted them most was all they had to do was sign a piece of paper – and no work was involved.'[8]

'Tell Me What You See': inside the cartoons

As the Beatles eschewed any personal involvement with the production of the cartoons, it was left to Al Brodax to replace their *actual* participation with an apparently plausible reconstruction of their perceived roles. The decision was therefore made to reproduce and exaggerate the public personae that had initially been projected in *A Hard Day's Night*, to be repeated in *Help!* and with which the public were, by this time, very familiar:

> John was the one with the wry sense of humour. Ringo was more of a clown. George was the gentleman who was also very much capable of a wry disposition too. And Paul was the ambassador of good will for the group, and the charmer, and the one that all the girls were running after.[9]

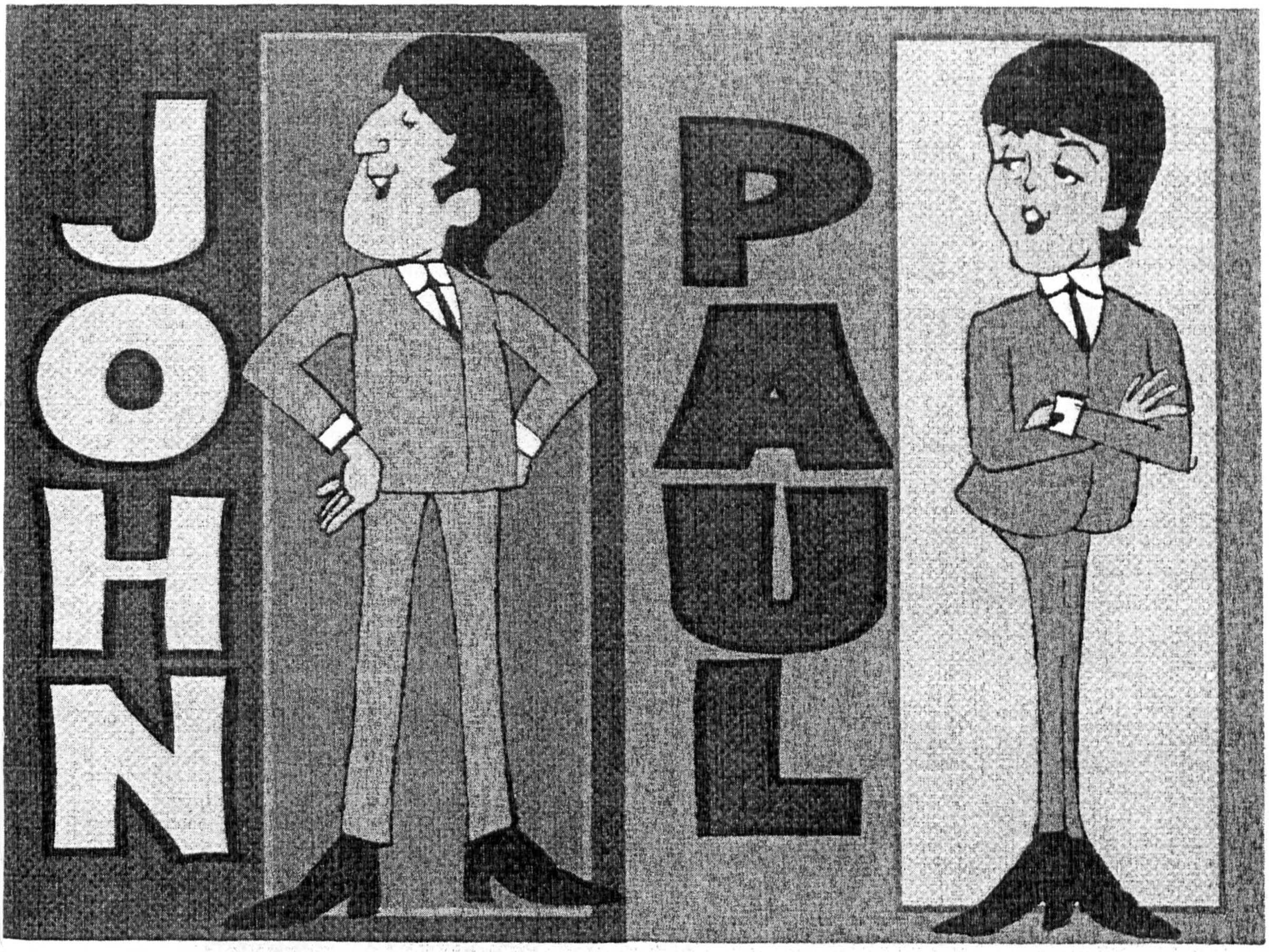
To this end, the annotated character sketches produced to guide the animation teams by Peter Sander of King Features in which he drew directly from the roles the Beatles had adopted in their first movie – 'I saw *A Hard Day's Night* till I knew it by heart'[10] – contained precise and detailed physical information:

JOHN:

- John, especially when delivering important lines, really looks the leader. Feet apart, hands on hips, chin up, looking down his nose with a slightly mocking expression. (This pose can also be used when he is pointing).
- Notice distance between John's mouth and nose.
- When facing front, he uses a sly, sideways look to talk to somebody.
- Pulls funny faces, especially after giving orders, which he immediately wipes off. He also looks the other way before giving an order.
- 'Showbiz' gestures can be used in long shot, mostly with hands. Gives feeling that John doesn't take his job as leader seriously.
- John moves with fast, jerky, almost aggressive movements.
- John never sits. He slouches.

PAUL:

- Paul is the most poised and stylish Beatle. When he talks, he uses his hands, with fingers spread to express what he is saying. He always looks straight at whoever he is talking to. He is the one who gets excited when John suggests anything.
- He doesn't really walk – he skips.
- Paul is the same height as George.
- When Paul is in the background, he stands with feet together and arms folded.
- Paul sits as though he is ready to jump up and get on with whatever is happening.
- When he is making his own suggestions and comments, especially ones suggesting mischief, he covers up by assuming a mock innocent look, eyes wide and head tilted to one side.
- He tends to put his hand to his mouth when he is excited.



Figures 1 and 2. John and Paul, from *The Beatles* Cartoons, © Indy Visuals.

GEORGE:

- Head always tilted forward.
- George never looks at who he is talking to. But his shoulders, which are hunched when he is in a standing or leaning pose, can indicate the direction.
- George is the same height as Paul.
- George is very loose limbed and angular when he walks. Remember his legs are long and thin. An emphasis on the knees will help the angular appearance.
- He often closes his eyes for short periods when he is talking.
- George nearly always gives the impression of frowning. This is because his eyebrows thicken as they reach his nose. Notice the way the eyes are drawn.
- Notice distance between nose and mouth. His mouth is always lop-sided.
- George never stands. He is always leaning against something, shoulders hunched, hands in pockets, legs crossed.
- Even when George sits, he looks awkward and angular.

RINGO:

- Ringo is the nice gentle Beatle, although he always looks rather sad.
- Ringo always looks a bit disjointed, whether walking or standing.
- Ringo walks in a Groucho Marx pose.
- Keep upper lip protruding. Keep Ringo's neck thin to help the disjointed look. Keep hair at back long and shaggy.
- When Ringo laughs, having made a funny remark he squints his eyes.
- When Ringo stands, he always droops forward. His clothes tend to look as though they are a bit too big.
- Normally, Ringo is always deadpan but should an expression be required the main movement is arching the eyebrows. Keep the mouth in a wavy line.
- Ringo sits normally, slightly hunched.
- Ringo is half a head smaller than George and Paul.

Inasmuch as the guidelines served to create 'caricatures of the *popular conception* of the cuddly mop-tops, rather than caricatures of the Beatles as such',[11] a similar reliance on the familiar was evident in the cartoons' storylines which were, to an extent, restricted by the supply of songs and the opportunities

Figures 3 and 4. George and Ringo, from *The Beatles* cartoons, © Indy Visuals.

afforded by their lyrics. Supernatural encounters (ghosts, witches, magic) were the most common themes, followed by confrontations with corporeal villains (mad scientists, spies, robbers) and dream/fantasy sequences (including adventures with Robin Hood, King Arthur, Marie Antoinette). A variety of exotic locations were employed (the African jungle, the Swiss Alps, outer space) and when specific misfortunes occurred, it was usually the hapless Ringo who was at fault.

Defending the relative lack of narrative originality, Jack Stokes has admitted that he was repeatedly reminded by the series' sponsors (notably US toy manufacturer A. C. Gilbert) that the age range (5–14) of the identified target audience – for the series itself and the associated merchandise – should remain a crucial constraint on his creative ambitions: 'It would have been marvellous to start with rough stories and then get the Beatles to ad-lib dialogue, but the results might have been too offbeat.'[12] A. C. Gilbert's president, Anson Isaacson, made much of his company's investment in the series as a final attempt to turn around its relatively poor profits in recent years:

> We have undoubtedly captured the plum of the season in the Beatles. We have exciting new products, new packaging concepts, a massive television promotion . . . and now the four most powerful salesmen in the world today, the Beatles, selling pre-Christmas and continuing long, long thereafter.[13]

The other major restrictions, of course, were more tangible. Extensions of time and money were unavailable for an uncertain venture with no previous models from which the likelihood of success or failure might be guessed. Al Brodax retrospectively admitted of the cartoons' artwork: 'it was kind of primitive. We didn't have much money. It was a low budget operation.'[14] Animator Dennis Hunt's verdict on the five-week turnaround for each episode was that 'the pressure of completion dates meant all hands to the wheel. We just churned the stuff out . . . it did feel at times like being on a treadmill.'[15]

Indeed, without the presence of The Beatles, it is generally acknowledged that aesthetically the series had little to commend itself: '*The Beatles* was a mundane, uninspired, technically deprived and artistically crude Saturday morning children's television series. [But] it was an enormous hit.'[16]

'Hello Goodbye': the neglect of the cartoons

Given the enormous interest in, and numerous histories of, the Beatles, it is odd that this particular segment of their career has slipped into obscurity. In the pages of the many biographies, chronologies and recollections of the group and/or its members, the series is rarely referred to at all; if it is, it is usually dismissed as an event of little interest or value. There are four principal reasons for this continued neglect.

First, it is likely that the significance of the cartoons was largely concealed even at the time of their production. In the mid 1960s, the manufacture and sale of Beatles-related merchandise was transforming the commercial status of popular music from that of a mildly profitable local cottage industry into a global corporate enterprise. In 1964, 'the value of the world market for Beatle products was estimated at nearly £40 million. The *Wall Street Journal* predicted

that Americans alone would spend $50 million on such goods. In retrospect these figures were probably conservative estimates.'[17]

Against a background of unprecedented commercial activity, the cartoon series was inevitably viewed as simply one more product, of no more importance than the bubble bath, nighties, chewing gum, wigs, canned breath, dishcloths, masks and pillows that already bore the group's name.[18] And although he was reportedly happy with both the commercial and creative aspects of the cartoons, manager Brian Epstein's attitude to the series remained – like that of the Beatles – instrumental rather than expressive: it was welcomed because it provided substantial profits in return for minimal investment.[19]

Secondly, there is little doubt that the Beatles themselves were at best unenthusiastic and at worst hostile to their stereotypical and simplistic depiction within the cartoons. Although John Lennon later admitted to a certain fascination with the series, he was consistently vehement in his condemnation of the restrictions imposed on the group during the years of Beatlemania, and his determination that they should not be repeated.[20] He drew particular attention to the Beatles' obligations to maintain the familiarity of their public personae: 'It was a fucking humiliation. One has to completely humiliate oneself to be what the Beatles were ... until this complete craziness is surrounding you.'[21] And Paul McCartney has clarified his fears when the second series of *The Beatles* was screened on ABC in the autumn of 1966: 'We were fed up with being the Beatles. We really hated that fucking four little mop top boys approach. We were not boys, we were men.'[22]

To the extent that the cartoons perpetuated the myth of the 'Fab Four', via its continued reproduction and exploitation of images and roles which the group found inappropriate and distasteful, it served to create tensions which would certainly have been apparent to Epstein, who 'from the start of his association with the Beatles ... had abhorred even a threatened exploitation of them'.[23] As the 1960s progressed, the gap between the private lives of the Beatles and the public world of *The Beatles* became ever more evident. In addition, the complexity and ambition of the group's songs from 1966 onwards (following the decision to abandon touring in order to concentrate on studio recording) and the growing impact of drugs on its output made the marriage between Beatles music and the conventions of a Saturday morning television cartoon increasingly difficult to sustain.

The assertion that 'the Beatles themselves were not satisfied with the finished product and were able to prevent the cartoons from being broadcast in England' remains unsubstantiated.[24] However, the acquisition of the cartoons by the Beatles-owned Apple Corps Ltd in the mid 1990s and the subsequent silence about their future have led some to speculate that it is indeed the intention of the Beatles to continue to conceal the series indefinitely.

Whatever the validity of the above claim, it is quite certain that a third factor to have contributed to the absence of any critical discussion of the series is that its history is obscure and access to it limited. As noted earlier, the cartoons were not shown in Britain until long after the group had disbanded, and then only incompletely in two regions.

Explaining the decision in 1967 to end production after three years (when

the series was still attracting a 36 per cent share of the audience), Brodax maintained that 'it's a long run for a cartoon show'.[25] Of ABC's decision to end reruns in 1969, Fred Silverman, Head of Daytime Programming at rival network CBS, whose *Space Ghost* cartoon, transmitted against *The Beatles*, was claiming a 44 per cent audience share, commented: 'Kids get tired of shows quickly. They would rather watch new shows than repeats of old ones.'[26]

The brief availability of the series in the 1960s and the perennial difficulty of access to it in the decades since have thus combined to restrict public knowledge as well as academic research. And while in some cases such a 'disappearance' may stimulate interest and investigation, it has only allowed *The Beatles* to remain unnoticed.

Finally, the history of *The Beatles* provides an illustration of an unavoidable, if regrettable, point concerning the status of animation generally, which is tellingly repeated by Paul Wells:

> it still remains the case that animation somehow has to justify itself. Seemingly, in order to write about animation it must be constantly 'defined'; lifted from its status as children's entertainment or as a television schedule filler; proven as valid on historical or institutional grounds. Perhaps 'the cartoon' has unintentionally inhibited the address of animation as art.[27]

While animation in the cinema has largely managed to overcome the trivialization stemming from the persistence of elitist notions of culture, animation on the small screen still has to grapple with the prejudices of critical perspectives in which it is implicitly derided and explicitly devalued. In this respect *The Beatles* cartoon series was additionally disadvantaged: by its deliberate and unashamed targeting of a young audience; by its television rather than cinematic production, and in particular by the switch of scheduling which saw it competing against and bracketed with cartoons like *Cool McCool* (CBS), *Top Cat* (NBC), *Jonny Quest* (CBS) and *Mighty Mouse* (CBS); and, of course, by its central component of rock'n'roll, long dismissed as an inferior and shallow form of music.

Thus defined, as a pop music-cartoon shown on children's television, it becomes apparent that the lack of serious attention, critical respect and artistic pride in the series was, especially in the 1960s, not entirely surprising or unexpected.

'Getting Better'? The cartoons today

Given the recent resurgence of activity around the Beatles – encouraged by record and film re-releases, the group's own *Anthology* television series in 1995–96, and a variety of actual or proposed video projects – it may be that now is an opportune moment at which to engage in a re-assessment of *The Beatles*. Specifically, the impacts and influences of the series can be considered in three areas of the entertainment media – film, television and music video.

Film

The clearest legacy of the series to film was the production of *Yellow Submarine*. In 1963, United Artists, conscious of the spiralling popularity of the Beatles

(although not yet in the US), had contracted with Brian Epstein for a three-picture deal with the group, and had appointed the London-based American Walter Shenson as producer. *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* had been critical and commercial successes. *A Hard Day's Night*, filmed in six weeks at a cost of £200,000, went on to gross $14 million worldwide on its initial release; *Help!*, which was filmed over nine weeks at a cost of £400,000, was the most profitable British film of 1965. By 1967, however, the Beatles, tired of the demands of movie-making and largely unimpressed by the potential scripts they had been offered to date, were reluctant to co-operate with United Artists' demands for the contracted final film. Their interest in Joe Orton's screenplay *Up Against It* was abruptly ended in August 1967 with Orton's death – ironically, on the very day he was to meet with director Richard Lester at Twickenham Studios to discuss the script.

At this point, Brodax intervened to urge Epstein to reflect on his earlier promise to allow King Features to make a full-length animated feature after the television cartoons. Recognizing an opportunity to satisfy United Artists and King Features, Epstein agreed, albeit with little optimism: 'Brian treated it as a throw-away, a means of fulfilling their obligation to provide United Artists with a third film.'[28] When the Beatles learned that their new film was to be a cartoon, produced by those responsible for the cartoon series, they were reportedly furious, refusing any personal involvement and permitting only previously rejected songs to be included on the soundtrack. However, after viewing some early footage, they were impressed enough to agree to appear at the conclusion of the film and, following the positive response to its release in July 1968, they were happy to allow themselves 'a massive change of heart'[29] in order to be closely associated with the critical acclaim it has continued to receive:

> The film is a masterpiece and it has opened up new and undreamed of horizons for animation. It bears seeing several times for its content to be fully appreciated, and it has given such an impetus to the full-length animation cinema that it is already a classic.[30]

In addition to Brodax, the film, produced by King Features and distributed by United Artists, involved many of the TVC personnel who had contributed to *The Beatles*. They included animation director Jack Stokes, animators Hester Coblentz, Rich Cox, Reg Lodge and Edric Radage, director George Dunning, and actor Lance Percival.

Despite the similarities of personnel, the most immediate difference between *Yellow Submarine* and *The Beatles* lies in the movie's ambitions to depict the increased complexity of the personal and professional lives of the group. It accomplishes this in two ways. The first is to expand the breadth and depth of the plot, so that, for example, events take place not just in the grounded reality of Liverpool, but in the fantastic, mythical world of Pepperland, whose protagonists are from yet more worlds. Thus we see the innocent inhabitants who seek to retain the grandeur of an Edwardian aristocracy overrun by an invasion force of monsters and mutants that reflects Surrealism's 'uneasy marriage of reason and nightmare which has dominated the twentieth century'.[31]

Secondly, the figures of the Beatles themselves have been transformed from the Fab Four of the television cartoons. Gone is the uniformity of the Beatle haircuts, the collarless Pierre Cardin suits, the ever-present smiles. Instead we see four individuals, whose idiosyncrasies are not hidden, but highlighted through the eccentricities of appearance, hairstyle, mannerisms and demeanour. (See Figure 5.)

In fact the depictions of the Beatles in Pepperland act as a compendium of visual styles of the late 1960s – Op Art, Pop Art, Art Nouveau, Psychedelia, Surrealism. It is important to understand that one of the keys to the success of the Beatles lay in their capacity to recall and reproduce a variety of pre-existing styles. In musical terms, this included the Latin ballad (*And I Love Her*), the lullaby (*Good Night*), the music hall number (*Your Mother Should Know*), the Disney tune (*Do You Want To know A Secret*), the hymn (*Let It Be*), and the circus overture (*Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite*). In visual terms, as here in *Yellow Submarine*, the principal influences were from contemporary artists like Peter Blake who had designed the *Sgt Pepper* album cover; Californian designers such as Stanley Mouse, Wes Wilson, Alton Kelley and Victor Moscoso, whose psychedelic typography 'heralded a style that was to become the *de rigeur* of the flower power subculture which blossomed on America's West Coast in 1966';[32] the whimsical drawings of the Victorian illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, whose exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum had drawn huge crowds in the Summer of 1966; the resurgence of interest in

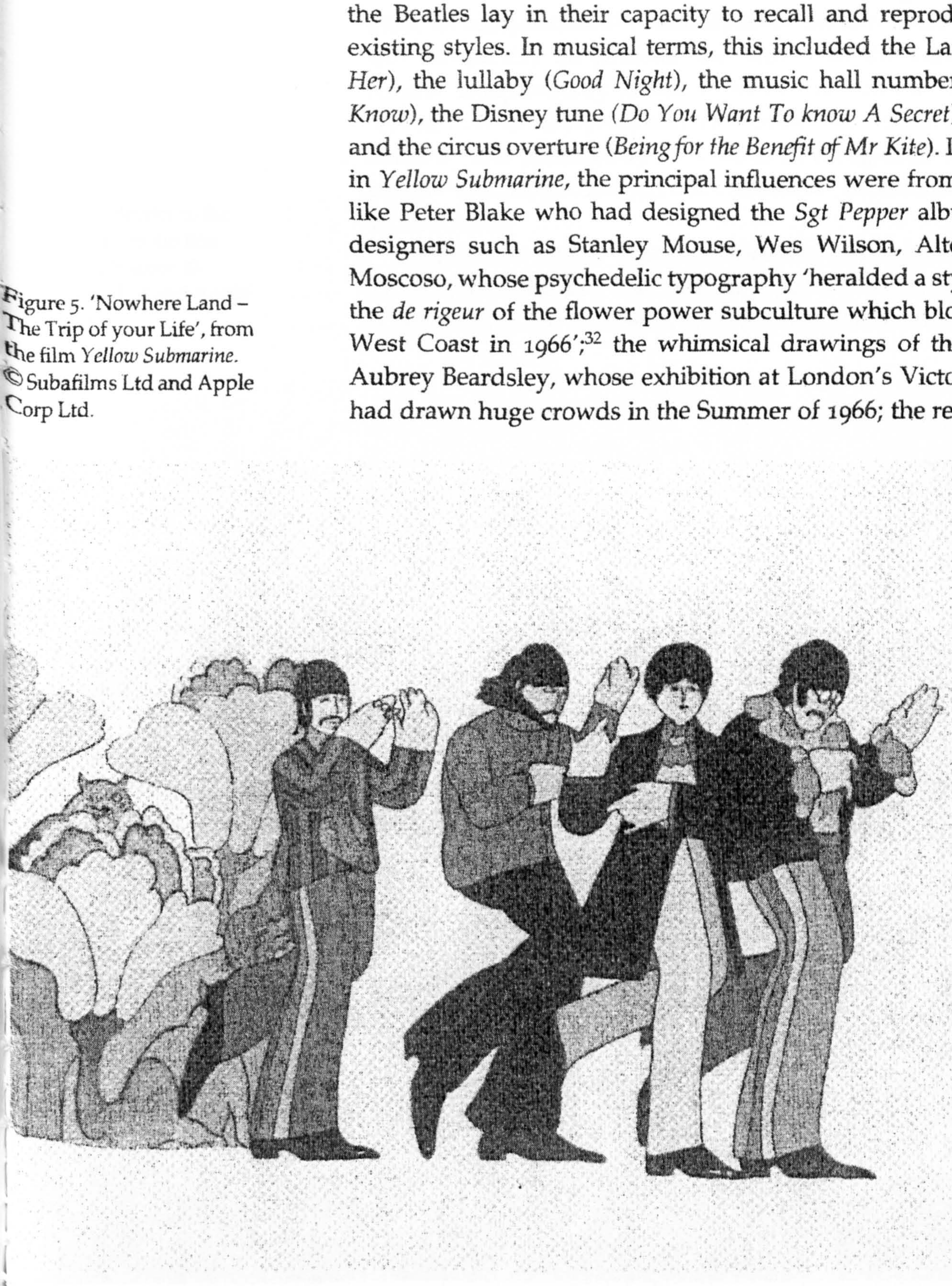


Figure 5. 'Nowhere Land – The Trip of your Life', from the film *Yellow Submarine*. © Subafilms Ltd and Apple Corp Ltd.

Magritte and Dali as the most celebrated exponents of Surrealism which, in particular, relocated familiar objects in unfamiliar environments; the 'geometric distortion of space and perspective'[33] characteristic of Bridget Riley's Op Art; and the impact throughout the 1960s of Pop artists like Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. *Yellow Submarine* collected and combined all these influences. Thus, the images of the Beatles in the film challenged common perceptions of the group itself, in the same way that those artistic movements posed questions to past and current traditions within art. (See Figure 6.)

While *Yellow Submarine*'s irreverent dismantling of the Beatles' former identities, its compilation of visual styles of the late 1960s and its narrative tempo and complexity all distance the film from the cartoons, they nonetheless remain unequivocally linked in form and content. If, as has been claimed, '*Yellow Submarine* crystallised the real Beatles' vision of counter-culture with a dexterity and accessibility',[34] it has to be recognized that the movie's achievements – and all that they, in turn, inspired – benefited directly from the history of *The Beatles*.

It should be noted, of course, that the counter-culture was not created by The Beatles. That they were leading figures in its circulation around the world is undeniable, but as John Lennon himself has commented:

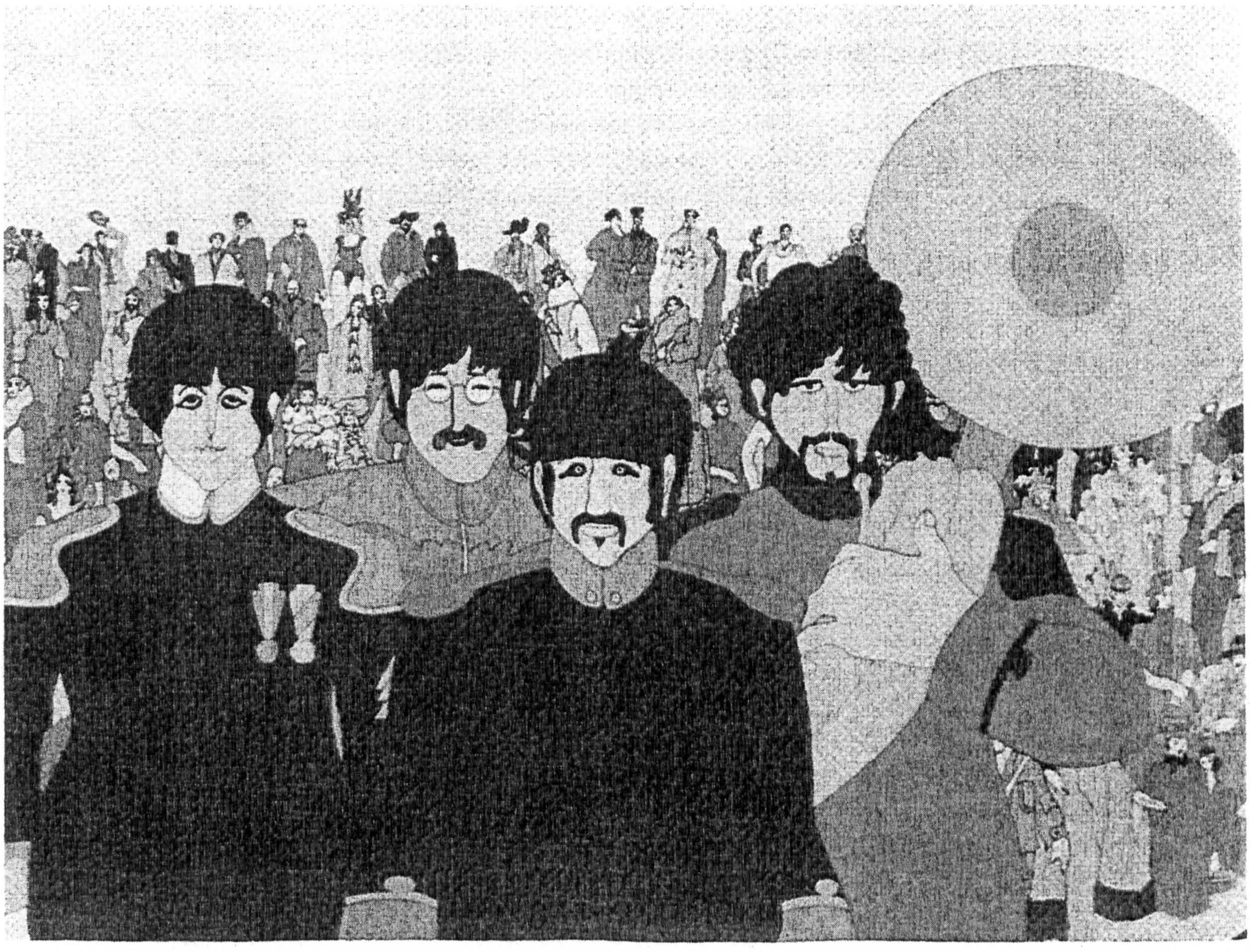


Figure 6. 'Beatles to the Rescue', from the film *Yellow Submarine*. © Subafilms Ltd and Apple Corp Ltd.

> Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles too. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of the ship. But the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest shouting 'Land Ho!' ... but we were all in the same damn boat.[35]

While the essence of the counter-culture (or the underground, or the hippy project) has been broadly defined as challenging traditional political and behavioural conventions, the specific dismantling of formal boundaries which accompanied that challenge has often been overlooked. In fact, one of the more important facets of the cultural revolution of the late 1960s was its fusion of what had been quite separate practices. Thus, art, literature, music, dance and poetry were permitted to co-exist, either in performance or perspective. The aphorism that work is necessary in order to provide the material conditions to permit leisure was rejected by many. The realization that distinctions of gender, race, sexuality and marital status are political rather than natural categories was common. And the rigid barriers between image and reality were actively contested through the use of hallucinogenic drugs.

In retrospect, it is easy to see how *Yellow Submarine* encompassed and reflected so many of these themes. While *The Beatles* sought to convey the simplicities and securities of the 'Swinging Sixties', *Yellow Submarine* mirrored the complexities and uncertainties of newly discovered alternatives. Also, the Beatles themselves had changed: from 'lads writing songs simply to play to screaming fans on one-night stands and wanting a simple and immediate reaction'[36] to 'beings such as the modern world had never seen ... [who had] felt everything, done everything, tasted everything, had a surfeit of everything'.[37] In visual terms, nowhere is the scale of that transformation better displayed than in the route from *The Beatles* to *Yellow Submarine*.

Television

When Brodax proposed the original television series, it was his intention to go on to produce similar cartoons based around other popular UK groups at the forefront of the 'British Invasion' of 1964–65, notably Freddie & The Dreamers and Herman's Hermits. (Other, equally successful, groups, like the Kinks and the Rolling Stones, were ruled out since their image and demeanour were deemed to be inappropriate for cartoon depiction.) These planned series did not materialize, but popular music cartoons were produced by other studios around other performers, including *The Archies* (1968–72) produced by Filmation for CBS, and *The Jackson Five* (1971–73), made by Rankin/BASS for ABC. Indeed, the appeal of *The Archies* was such that although its members had no existence outside the cartoons (there were no Archies *per se*) the fictitious group achieved a Number One single in the UK and the US in 1969 with *Sugar Sugar*. *New Kids On The Block* (1990–91) is perhaps the most recent example of a group featuring in its own television cartoon series.

The surviving Beatles have maintained an embarrassed silence about the cartoon series; there is, for example no mention of it in the group's autobiographical *Anthology*.[38] Their only involvement in television animation over the last 30 years has been their separate appearances (and voice-overs) in three

episodes of *The Simpsons*; and it is interesting to note that the depictions of them there are much more reminiscent, in form and character, of *The Beatles* than of *Yellow Submarine*.

Yet perhaps the most spectacular imitation of *The Beatles* came not in a cartoon but in the live-action series of *The Monkees* (1966–68). After auditioning, rehearsing and launching a group whose screen roles coincided exactly with those of the cartoon Beatles, Hollywood-based producers Bob Rafelson and Bert Schneider promoted the Monkees through the Screen Gems television series of the same name. Within the 58 episodes transmitted on NBC, there were obvious storyline similarities to some of the adventures of *The Beatles*. The success of *The Monkees* – the series won two Emmy awards, and the group released 9 albums and 14 singles before its demise in May 1970 – has created a strategy for musical promotion which has been copied by groups throughout the decades since. From the examples of *The Partridge Family* (1970–74) to British teenybopper bands *S Club 7* (1999–2001) and *Cleopatra: Comin' Atcha* (1999-2000), the format of the popular music live-action adventure-comedy television series has continued to reproduce the motivations and conventions of *The Beatles*.

One other legacy to television may have been in the impetus that the animated series was to have for *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. The explicit debt that the television programmes (and subsequent movies) owed to *Yellow Submarine* and to the group's self-produced TV film, *Magical Mystery Tour*, has been well documented.[39] While the form of Terry Gilliam's animated sequences in *Monty Python* revisits many of the techniques of *Yellow Submarine*, and the content of many of its non-animated sequences utilizes ideas from *Magical Mystery Tour*, the initial connection between those two features and the earlier *The Beatles* tends to be disregarded.

Music video

The medium of music video did not exist within The Beatles' career. At best, there were short promotional films produced to advertise a new single and widely distributed to television stations; the promos made for the Beatles by Peter Goldmann to accompany the release of *Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields Forever* in 1967 were among the first of these. It was not until the mid 1970s that the first genuine pop videos began to appear (the earliest was probably Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* in 1975). The comment at the time of the former Monkee, Mike Nesmith that music video was 'the single most important event in the history of the rock'n'roll music industry'[40] may be somewhat inflated, but it does typify the importance that popular music quickly attached to the medium. That importance continues to be emphasized today. It is now accepted that in the fiercely competitive world of singles releases, the possibilities for additional promotion that a music video affords cannot be shunned, and its production is almost obligatory for all artists. The launch of MTV in 1981 – a 24-hour, non-stop, commercial cable channel dedicated entirely to pop videos – only confirmed this.

Music videos have also become subjects for academic debate, with

researchers probing their ideological characteristics,[41] strategies of visual incorporation[42] and commercial consequences.[43] A succinct analysis of the form they may take has been provided by Simon Frith.[44] He separates performance video, in which the group or artist is seen performing the song, sometimes to an audience; narrative video, where the lyrics of the song provide a background against which a related story is enacted; and conceptual video, in which a montage of images, special effects and graphics produces a visual accompaniment to the rhythm and melody of the song.

In fact, these three treatments can be readily distinguished throughout *The Beatles*. In the first series, all the musical interludes were performances (the group is shown on stage or in rehearsal) or narratives (the Beatles typically pursuing an adversary or pursued by fans). By the third and final series, a small but significant proportion of the sequences were conceptual (*Strawberry Fields Forever, I'm Only Sleeping, And Your Bird Can Sing*), in which elements of photography, text and psychedelic artwork were combined to create images disconnected from the earlier conventions of narrative or performance.

Although *The Beatles* did not create these animated opportunities, they did utilize them in original and accessible ways. In so doing, they can be seen to have anticipated by a decade the options from which contemporary video-makers have made their selections. While it may be argued that similarities with music video can be seen more clearly in the artifices of *Yellow Submarine*, or even of *The Monkees*, it has to be noted that these projects themselves were derived substantially from the structures and cultures of *The Beatles*.

At the same time *The Beatles* did create and develop the fundamental objective associated with the contemporary pop video – to sell other products. With very few exceptions, pop videos do not sell in large numbers; their function is to act as an advertisement for other commodities, usually an album or single release. There were three groups of commodities that were to directly benefit through the Beatles' cartoon series – the group's records, which gained additional and considerable exposure; 'cartoon-Beatle' merchandise (which echoed the enormous range of 'genuine-Beatle' merchandise that had been introduced across the United States in 1964), including a Beatles cartoon kit, cartoon candy bars, and inflatable cartoon dolls; and those products manufactured and advertised by the series' sponsors.

There is perhaps a contradiction between the frankly commercial aims of *The Beatles*, which yielded only a few items of associated memorabilia, and the hippy/alternative ethic of *Yellow Submarine*, which in fact yielded much more in the way of merchandise (toys, games, jigsaws, souvenir books, watches, costumes, bedclothes, greeting cards, lampshades, lunchboxes, crockery). That these items were happily accepted into the counter-culture, through being defined as examples of avant-garde artistic resistance rather than of commercial exploitation, says much about the power of the Beatles brand in the late 1960s. It is this incongruity that has allowed critics such as George Melly to conclude that 'for all its admirable intentions, this film was perhaps in the end more damaging to pop'.[45]

Contemporary music video, of course, suffers from no confusion or sense of guilt about the possibilities of a confrontation between the authentic and the

commercial. The Spice Girls of 1996–98 and Hear'Say of 2001 may be the most obvious beneficiaries of a popular music industry that routinely designs and markets performers, merchandise, music video and television as related components of the same commodity, but the history of *The Beatles* demonstrates that this is not a recent invention.

Finally, let me offer one observation that stems in part from the dichotomy presented in the title of a recent book: *Classics and Trash*. In her account of the continuities and discontinuities between the products of elite and popular culture, Harriett Hawkins stresses that 'considerable interactions, deliberate echoes, conscious fusions and unconscious confusions between "high" art and "popular" genres ... occur all the time'.[46] The two traditions are not as distinct as may be commonly imagined. While it would be extravagant to seek to elevate *The Beatles* into the category of classics, it would be equally perverse to dismiss the series as trash. However, in 1996 it was revealed that the original surviving scripts of the series (around 30 copies of each episode) had been destroyed.[47] It would thus appear that, for whatever reasons, the repudiation of the cartoons still continues and there is little impetus yet towards treating them as interesting and valuable historical items. Given the above discussion, this is unfortunate. There clearly is a place for serious discussion of *The Beatles* – in the narrative of the group itself, in its significance for television history, and in the manner in which it provided (if only temporarily) individual and collective templates with which a visual representation of the Beatles was presented to much of the world during the period of their greatest celebrity.

Notes

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5 Lewisohn, *The Complete Beatles Chronicle*, pp.354–5.

6 *Television Chronicles*, vol. 3, 1995, p.8.

7 Carr, *Beatles at the Movies*, p.85.

8 Danny Somach and Ken Sharp, *Meet The Beatles ... Again!*, Havertown, PA: Musicom, 1995, p.221.

9 Ibid., p.224.

10 H. V. Fulpen, *The Beatles*, London: Plexus, 1983, p.104.

11 Mike Evans, *The Art of The Beatles*, New York: Beech Tree, 1984, p.59. The guidelines are printed in Carr, *Beatles at The Movies*, among other places.

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13 Mitchell Axelrod, *Beatletoons*, Pickens, SC: Wynn, 1999, p.25.

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15 Axelrod, *Beatletoons*, p.64

16 Ibid., p.12.

17 Peter McCabe and Robert D. Schonfield, *Apple to the Core: The Unmaking of The Beatles*, London: Martin Brian & O'Keefe Ltd, 1972, p.66.

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40 Jack Banks, *Monopoly Television*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996, p.29.

41 E. Ann Kaplan, *Rocking around the Clock*, New York: Methuen, 1987.

42 Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

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44 Simon Frith, *Music for Pleasure*, Cambridge: Polity, 1988.

45 George Melly, *Revolt into Style*, London: Allen Lane, 1970, p.199.

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CONCLUSION

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND THE BEATLES

Research, Scholarship And the Beatles

What justifications are there for engaging, over several years, in a programme of research which investigates the music and career of a group that came together in the 1950s, effectively disbanded more than thirty years ago, and two of whose members have died? The answer lies in a combination of the professional and the personal.

As a sociologist with particular interests in the areas of mass communications and cultural studies, it appears to me that the story of the Beatles presents a startling illustration of the manner in which processes of structural and cultural transformation can be recognised and charted. Economically, the group was largely responsible for the evolution of popular music in Britain from a small branch of the domestic entertainment business into one of the country's most profitable exports. Musically, the Beatles introduced innovative elements into the creation of their songs that served as examples for others to follow. Industrially, they demonstrated assertions of independence that helped to free them, and others, from the restrictive and paternalistic patterns of management and organisation that had characterised the business in this country. Historically, the group existed, and continues to exist, as one of the key moments in the narrative of the twentieth century. Politically, they demonstrated that entertainers might also be permitted to step into the role of intellectuals. Socially, their unprecedented global popularity was achieved in part by the capacity that they, and their music, possessed to overcome traditional distinctions of nationality, age, social class and gender amongst communities of fans. Culturally, they shifted the consumption, discussion and analysis of popular music into settings from which it had been previously excluded.

To have accomplished just one of the above would represent a considerable achievement. To have succeeded in all of them is, quite simply, staggering, and my research has endeavoured to explain at least some of the strategies and impulses through which those successes were effected. In doing so, it has combined accounts of the group itself, analyses of the popular music environment in which it was (and is) located, and considerations of the society that contained them.

And of course, that society has continued to enthusiastically (re)produce and consume the Beatles. One form in which this has been immediately apparent can be seen in the intense media interest in the group and its members. The murder of John Lennon in 1980, the knighthood given to George Martin in 1995 and Paul McCartney in 1996, the acquisition by the National Trust in 1996 of McCartney's childhood home in Forthlin Road, Liverpool, and in 2002 of Lennon's former home in Menlove Avenue, Liverpool, the death of Linda McCartney in 1998, the attempted murder of George Harrison in 1999 and his death from cancer in 2001, McCartney's marriage to Heather Mills in 2002, and the legal battle between McCartney and Yoko Ono in 2003 over songwriting credits have all attracted sustained coverage from a news media keen to meet the apparently insatiable public desire for information about the group.

Within the specific activities of popular music, the group continues to exert a formidable commercial presence. Over the past few years, five separate albums of old recordings (some previously unavailable, some long available) have been released and purchased in spectacular numbers: "The Beatles Live At The BBC" (December 1994), "Anthology 1" (November 1995), "Anthology 2" (March 1996), "Anthology 3" (November 1996) and "1" (November 2000). In addition to the group's own recordings, its songs continue to be lucratively covered by others (including Gareth

Gates and Will Young's million-selling version of "The Long And Winding Road" in 2002), many contemporary performers make repeated public affirmations of their debt to the Beatles (such as Liam Gallagher's decision to give the name Lennon to his baby son in 1999), and in the increasingly popular market for 'tribute bands' there are several that seek to recreate the appearance and music of the Beatles in the 1960s (the Bootleg Beatles, Cavern, the Beatroots, the Beatalls).

Thus, within both the news and entertainment media, perceptions of the Beatles occupy a central position – just as they did forty years ago. The longevity of the Beatles' career, the durability of their music, and group's ability to transcend divisions and deaths within its membership indicate that research into the contexts, consequences and circumstances of 'the story of the Beatles' can reveal much about the group and a society that seeks to continually represent and re-present them.

But of course, the decision to undertake research (of any kind) may be shaped by personal factors, and in my case it would be foolish to deny them. Long before I became a sociologist, I was a fan of the Beatles. Over several decades, their music has brought me great pleasure, their behaviour has stimulated discussion and debate with others, their personal histories have brought sadness and regret. On a personal level, therefore, I readily acknowledge that the research has allowed me to play a (very small) part in the history of the Beatles through the generation and circulation of my theories and arguments about the group: in particular, the knowledge that others may decide to employ (or adopt, or refine, or dismiss) some of those ideas in the future is a source of great satisfaction. Far from the research being impeded or compromised by my own personal motivations, I firmly believe that it has been improved and validated by the enthusiasm, interests and energy that I have been able to incorporate into its design and execution. In recognising the combination of the professional and the

personal that underpins this research, I have therefore been seeking to achieve the balance of critical distance and emotional empathy which ought to define effective sociological inquiry.

Of course, there is much still to be discovered about the Beatles, which I have not considered. There is a conspicuous lack of women's voices (as researchers and participants) in the story of the group; the nature of the connections to the past provided by tribute bands – and the ambitions of the audiences that attend their performances – is yet to be investigated; and there has been little systematic reliance on oral history as a methodology by, for example, listening to those who were peers of the early Beatles in Liverpool. These are real and exciting possibilities for future work.

It has been suggested that "research (finding out new things or looking at old things in new ways) and scholarship (being aware and keeping abreast of what others have found out and argued) are the twin arteries of sociology's lifeblood" (Gubbay *et al* 1997: 251). Throughout, I have tried to maintain those two prescriptions. I have considered what others have said and written; I have offered new insights or interpretations. As a result, I believe that the opportunity to engage in this research has allowed me to produce an original, coherent and substantial body of work, which has added significantly to our knowledge about the Beatles.

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